

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
April 9, 2024

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

OTHERS: Interim Farm Manager White, Howard Hatch, HR Director Clough, Attorney Tom Closson

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 report: (\* see attached)**

Commissioner Ahern spoke about legislation that would allow individual farmers in New Hampshire to process their own beef and pigs without the need for a USDA inspector. He stated that Rob Johnson, legislative liaison between the New Hampshire Farm Bureau and the legislature, stated that many farmers in New Hampshire would like to see this happen. If Grafton County could process its own beef and pigs, it could be used to feed the DoC. It would also provide an opportunity to teach the inmates how to process meat, which could help them find a job after release. Rob Johnson stated that if Commissioner Ahern knew a Commissioner in Grafton County who would be interested in this program and could get a vote of the Board of Commissioners to show that they are in favor of this program, R. Johnson would take that with him, the next time he meets with the study group.

CA Libby stated that the Nursing Home cannot use meat that is not USDA-inspected. From her perspective, a vote of this board right now is very premature because input has not been asked from everyone involved. She stated that they had this discussion previously, and everyone on the complex who was involved was opposed to it, and she feels they need to take that into consideration. Interim FM White stated that Lee Robie stopped by the farm and discussed working together to purchase some dried-up dairy cows.

The Commissioners opened bids for Custom Cropping. The following bids were received:

	Murdo Limlaw		Kelleyview		Lambert Farm	
<b>CORN PLANTING</b>						
Spreading Manure	\$ 4,200.00	\$60/Acre	\$ 12,000.00	\$120/Acre	Didn't provide info	
Harrowing	\$ 2,100.00	\$30/Acre	\$ 5,600.00	\$40/Acre	Didn't provide info	
Planting Corn	\$ 1,750.00	\$25/Acre	\$ 3,920.00	\$28/Acre	\$ 2,100.00	\$30/Acre
<b>Total Cost for Corn Planting</b>	<b>\$ 8,050.00</b>		<b>\$ 21,520.00</b>		<b>\$ 2,100.00</b>	
<b>CORN HARVESTING</b>						
<b>Total Cost for Corn Harvesting</b>	<b>\$ 7,500.00</b>	<b>\$100/Acre + \$500 Packing</b>	<b>\$ 8,190.00</b>	<b>\$117/Acre</b>	<b>\$ 9,100.00</b>	<b>\$130/Acre</b>
<b>GRASS HAYLAGE</b>						
4 Cuttings per Season anticipated	\$4905/Cutting		\$9900/Cutting		\$7200/Cutting	
<b>Total for 4 Cuttings</b>	<b>\$ 19,620.00</b>	<b>\$54.50/Acre</b>	<b>\$ 39,600.00</b>	<b>\$111/Acre</b>	<b>\$ 28,800.00</b>	<b>\$80/Acre</b>
<b>DRY HAY</b>						
	\$3.00/bale - Square		No Bid		No Bid	
	\$50/bale - Round					
<b>Anticipate 4000 Square Bales</b>	<b>\$ 12,000.00</b>		<b>No Bid</b>		<b>No Bid</b>	

Interim FM White said he would review the bids and return with a recommendation.

Howard Hatch from Hatchland Farm was present at the meeting and explained that he has been asked to come to the County to help with different things over the years. He stated that when Interim FM White gets in a bind, he can call him. He noted that he could put the feed into the county farm better than most farms that submitted bids because he is located close by. He stated that the County is short on fertilizer for the corn, and he has extra manure that could be used. Hatchland Farm has tried to be a good neighbor, and H. Hatch stated that he would like to see the County Farm continue. He has visited the County farm for 75 years, and it is dear to him. He has offered the County to run their farms together, noting that they can do crop and cattle trials. He asked the Commissioners to think about it because it could be done. He noted that he is not getting into the bidding process because he cannot lose money. H. Hatch added that there is a lot of equipment at the County that belongs to Hatchland. He also told the Commissioners not to try to process their own meat, as it would not work. He has watched the Commissioners make mistakes in the past. He is willing to work with Interim FM White and the County, noting that he is not here to see the County go down, but he would like to see it continue. The Commissioners thanked H. Hatch for coming in.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she is concerned about what H. Hatch brought up. She feels like they did not hear what H. Hatch was saying from Interim FM White about the challenge of putting this out to bid, which caused issues for someone who is a good neighbor and resource to the County. Commissioner Piper stated that she agreed and did not ask Interim FM White to stay and discuss this now because she feels this is an ongoing issue requiring a longer conversation. CA Libby stated that the Commissioners had a long conversation about this in a nonpublic session before the Commissioners decided to go out to bid. Commissioner McLeod stated that she felt they did not get all the information. The Commissioners agreed to ask Interim FM White to return to discuss this further as they are not ready to make a decision.

**HR Director Clough arrived and requested to go into a nonpublic session.**

**MOTION:** \* 9:45 AM Commissioner McLeod moved to enter into a 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 according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a).

Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote.

Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said "yes," Commissioner McLeod said "yes," and Commissioner Piper said "yes," and Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\*10:17 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 said, "Yes," Commissioner Piper said, "Yes." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes," and the motion passes.

**Attorney Tom Closson arrived via Teams.**

**10:20 AM**

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to temporarily adjourn this meeting for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. All voted in favor.

Commissioner Piper stated that the motion passes. We will now adjourn this public meeting to consult with legal counsel. The public must leave the meeting room, and the door will be closed. We expect this to take about 30 minutes and plan to reconvene the public meeting as soon as we are done consulting with our attorney.

11:07 AM Commissioner Piper reconvenes the public meeting.

**Agenda Items**

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 26<sup>th</sup> and April 2<sup>nd</sup> meetings. Commissioner Piper had a few small edits.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the minutes from the March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the minutes from the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

**Interim FM White returned.**

Commissioner McLeod stated that she feels they should discuss H. Hatch's concerns and not leave the conversation as it was. She asked how these bids compare to what Hatchland Farm has done.

**MOTION:** \* 11:09 AM Commissioner McLeod moved to enter into a non-public session for the purposes of 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 (c). Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said "yes," Commissioner McLeod said "yes," and Commissioner Piper said "yes," and Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\*12:15 PM 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 McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “Yes,” Commissioner McLeod said, “Yes,” Commissioner Piper said, “Yes.” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes,” and the motion passes.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she would like to request a clear analysis of the bids received before they make a decision. Commissioner Ahern stated that he fears they will lose these bids submitted in good faith, and they owe it to the taxpayers. He stated that time is of the essence, and he thinks this is a big mistake.

**Agenda Items:**

1. March 21<sup>st</sup> Minutes Revision– CA Libby stated that the Others in Attendance list was not complete on the minutes and asked the Commissioners to approve revising that list to show who was at the meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to revise the 3.21.24 minutes to reflect the appropriate Others Present section. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Superior Court Report for the month of March.

3. The Commissioners signed check registers 1146;1148-1149

4. Commissioner Piper signed the following CDBG Drawdowns:

- GRDC - \$\$7,461
- CEDC - \$6,500

5. Pole Attachment Applications – Broadband Project – CA Libby explained that legal counsel and their Project Manager have reviewed these applications, and she is seeking approval to sign them.

**MOTION:** Commissioner McLeod moved to give CA Libby authority to sign off on the pole attachment applications. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Budget Discussion – The Commissioners discussed what information they would like from CA Libby for their budget meeting on Thursday.

**Commissioner Issues:**

Commissioner Ahern stated that he attended the Wentworth School Board meeting last night. He talked about the Alternative Sentencing program and how it affects the County's youth. He also offered a tour of the complex's departments and spoke about County government.

CA Libby stated that regarding the FCC conversation that Commissioner McLeod previously had, she thinks that counties who get involved with that are in states where counties do a lot more than the counties in New Hampshire do. The labor involved is extensive. Commissioner McLeod asked if there is a state office that the feds would contact who could bring someone in to help. CA Libby stated that she would look into that.

12:35 PM 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 the printed name.

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

## April 2024 Farm Report

1. There are currently 55 cows milking, averaging 78 pounds per cow. We produced 127,919 pounds of milk for the month of March. Components were 4.56% butterfat and 3.28% protein. The milk pay price in March was \$24.37 for Grafton County Farm.
2. Chickens are producing about 7-9 dozen eggs a day. All of the eggs go to either the public or we provide the jail around 50 dozen a month.
3. We have had 5 litters of piglets. We have several potential buyers for this year.
4. Bids are coming in to harvest our crops this year. Prices for newer equipment keep going up and hopefully we can partner with someone to help put in high quality feed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ben White

Interim Farm Manager