

GRAFTON COUNTY PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED FY25 BUDGET  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024

PRESENT: see attached attendance sheet

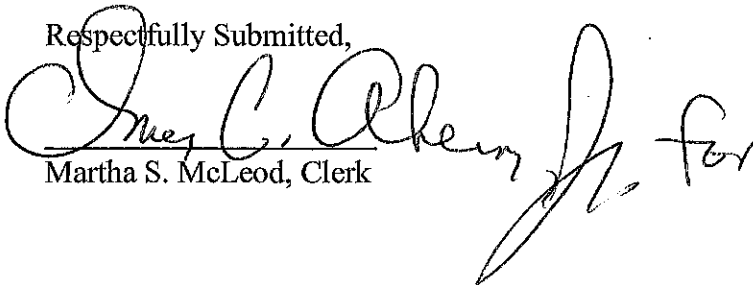
Commissioner Ahern called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

Commissioner McLeod reviewed the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Karen Hawthorne, Mary Bolduc from Lakes Region Community Services, and Alison Morgan from Grafton County Senior Citizens Council each took the time to thank the County for their funding and stated that it was very important for each of their organizations.

6:17 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

 for MSM.  
Martha S. McLeod, Clerk



# Proposed FY25 Budget Public Hearing

## May 28th 2024

Sign In Sheet ~ **PLEASE PRINT**

- 1 Heather Bergant
- 2 Mary Bolduc (LRCS)
- 3 Karen Hawthorne (LRCS)
- 4 Chesca Morgan GCSCC
- 5 Pam Gilheut GC Conservation
- 6 M. Hornick GCAO
- 7 D Lee UNHExt
- 8 Jim Oanes
- 9 Rich Colbeth
- 10 Ben White
- 11 Thayer Parento
- 12 Craig Labare
- 13 Julie Libby
- 14 Holly Burbank
- 15 Sam Norcross
- 16 Commissioner Athem
- 17 Commissioner McLeod
- 18 Commissioner Pper - via teams
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# FISCAL YEAR 2025

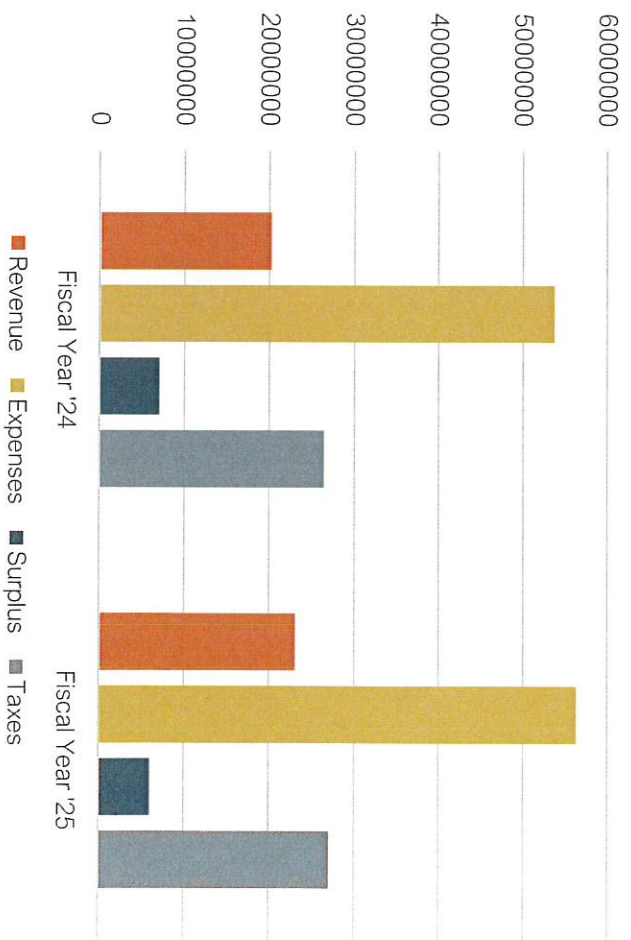
COMMISSIONERS' PROPOSED  
BUDGET



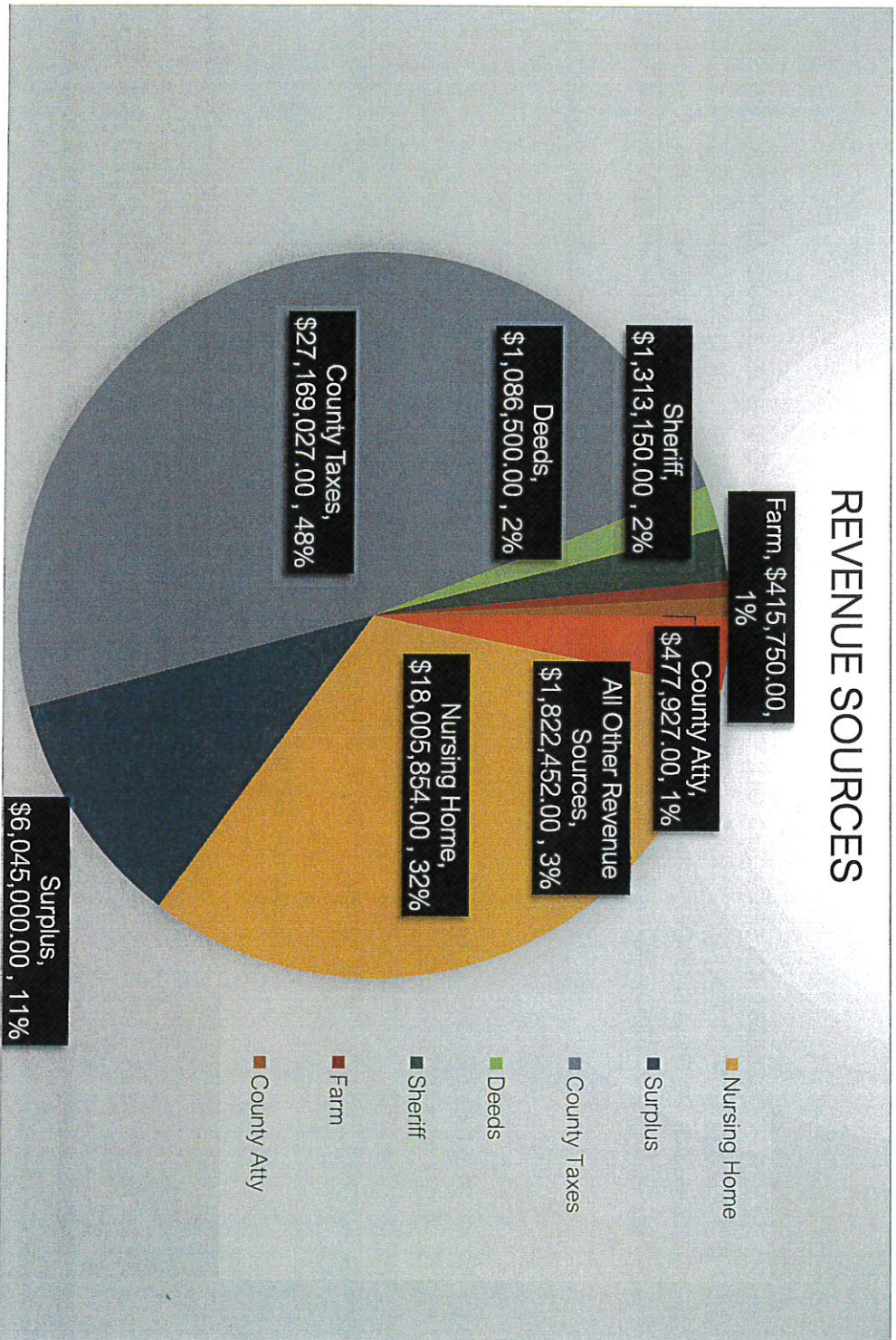
## Fiscal Year '25 Budget Summary

- Revenue increased – 14.42%
- Decreased Surplus Used by – 14.19%
- Expenses increased – 4.77%
- County Taxes increased – 2.46%

FY 24 v FY '25 Comparison



# REVENUE SOURCES



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# Revenue Highlights

Revenue has increased ~ 14.42%

The overall increase in revenue is being seen across almost all departments.

- **Nursing Home** – The largest increase in projected revenue is from the nursing home. Due to the targeted increases that were given in the Nursing department during FY '24, the County has been able to attract and retain employees. With this, we have also been able to increase the census. The nursing home is using a projected census of 110 compared to 98 in FY '24. This has resulted in a substantial increase in revenue. The revenue will increase by \$2,451,625.00

Other departments budgeting increases in revenue are:

- **County Attorney's Office** – Revenue in the County Attorney's office is primarily received from grant funding and charges for services for Circuit Court Prosecution. The slight increase is due to increased costs for those communities that are charged for prosecution services. These communities pay the full cost of the prosecutors, so as salary and benefit costs increase so do the charges for services.

## Revenue Highlights (continued)

- **Sheriff's Department** shows an increase of \$32,450 – the revenue increases in the Sheriff's Department are associated with cost reimbursement revenue sources, Court Bailiff and Contracted Special Details. Both of these have offsetting costs associated. The Court Bailiff is a wash as the County is reimbursed for all of its expenses through the State of NH, and the Contracted Special Details will produce revenue as the costs associated are less than the fee charged.
- **Interest Income** - Interest rates have remained steady at the higher rates and are anticipated to remain that way or only slightly decrease. In FY '24 we will exceed revenue projections by an estimated \$200,000. Therefore, we are budgeting to increase interest income to \$450,000 in FY '25.
- **Register of Deeds** – Per Register Monahan, "Grafton County is a prime location for living, working and recreating. With the expansion of internet service availability, there is no stopping growth and further development. As land comes out of current use and is considered for development we see increases in revenue in recording fees and copy fees. As land changes hands, we will continue to see growth of our four percent share of the Real Estate Transfer Tax. The most critical service that a concerned and dedicated citizen can provide is to step up to local planning boards and zoning boards of adjustments in order to continue to keep Grafton County developing with local control, oversight, and lawful decision making on new projects."
- **Farm**—The farm's revenue is projected to increase slightly due to an anticipated increase in the sale of produce.

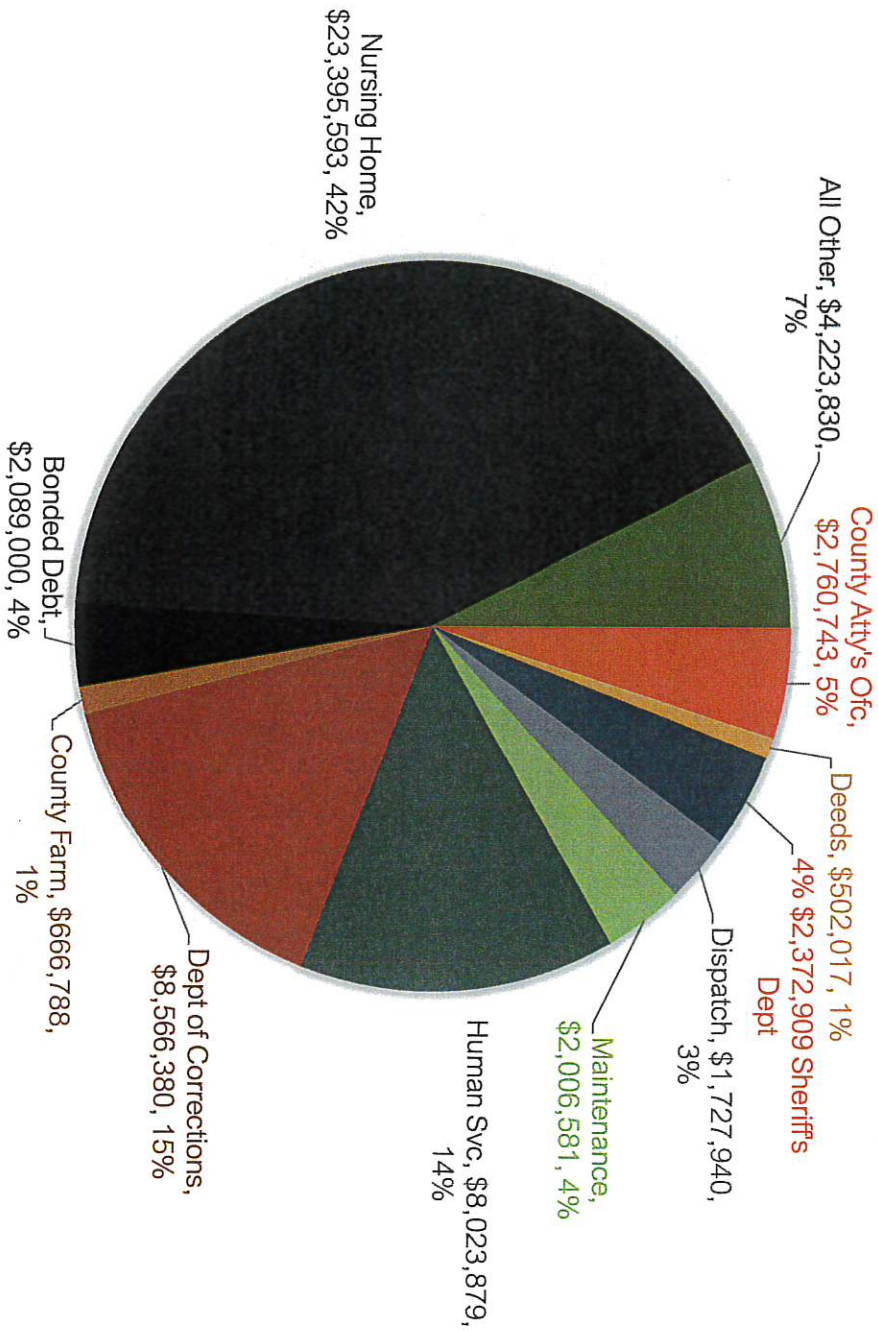
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## Revenue Highlights (continued)

- **Department of Corrections and Alternative Sentencing**—The County receives Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services (BDAS) funding from the State of NH DHHS. The funds are used for substance use disorder treatment. Funding for FY '25 has increased significantly, resulting in increases for both departments.
- **Amount of Surplus Used to Reduce Taxes**—In FY '24, the County used \$7,045,000 of fund balance to reduce taxes. This was higher than the amount of surplus typically used, and it was done to slightly decrease taxes. In addition, in the fall of 2023, the Commissioners and County Delegation voted to use \$5,000,000 of the County's Undesignated Fund Balance for the Broadband Middle Mile Project. These things have contributed to an overall decrease in the County's fund balance leaving less funds to be able to be used to reduce taxes.



## EXPENSE BREAKDOWN



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## Expenditure Highlights

- This year, the Commissioners have agreed to a 3% cost-of-living adjustment for all employees not covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement. A tentative agreement is also in place with the United Electrical Workers (UE Local 278), which represents employees at the nursing home, for a 3% cost-of-living adjustment. Negotiations are ongoing with the Teamsters Local 633, which represents employees in the Sheriff's Department and Dispatch Center.
- Health Insurance costs continue to be a significant financial challenge for the County. This year, notice was received that rates for our current plans would increase 25%, effective July 1, 2024. This would have cost an additional \$1,000,000 over the current year's costs. The Commissioners have accepted a proposal from Human Resources, which was discussed with the employees, to change the existing plans offered. Beginning July 1, 2024, the County will continue to offer two (2) plan choices for employees, but the co-payments and deductibles for each plan will increase.
- Over the past nine (9) months, the County has made significant strides in addressing the staffing challenges. Although we are still short-staffed in some areas, some of the salary and benefit changes we implemented during FY '24 have positively impacted us. Grafton County is continuously working to identify ways to help recruit and retain employees. While it is important to attract new employees, it is just as important to retain the valuable employees that we currently have. These factors are always considered as we make decisions regarding salaries and benefits.

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## Expenditure Highlights (Continued)

- The fiscal year 2025 budget includes several new positions, all budgeted to begin in January 2025. There is a new full-time Deputy Sheriff position, a new full-time Maintenance Assistant position, and a new Information Technology Director position. In addition to these new positions, the budget includes funding to restore one (1) of the four (4) Correctional Officer positions that were unfunded in fiscal year 2024. The Commissioners had very thorough discussions regarding these positions and decided that these positions are necessary for the continued successful operation of each department.
- We successfully hired nursing staff, so we reduced the expense for Contract Nursing in fiscal year 2025. The fiscal year 2024 budget shows a budgeted expense of \$3,600,000, which we have reduced to \$2,800,000 for fiscal year 2025.
- The County Cap is paid to the State of NH for Long Term Care expenses and Home and Community Based Services. The total Cap for all ten (10) counties is set by state statute and was level-funded for the state's biennium; therefore, the total cap will not increase for fiscal year 2025. Grafton County's share of that Cap is computed by the actual usage of services in the past three years. In fiscal year 2024, that percentage decreased slightly. We have budgeted for a slight increase in the percentage, but overall, the costs for the county cap show a decrease of \$65,924 for fiscal year 2025. This is a mandated expense that the county must statutorily pay.

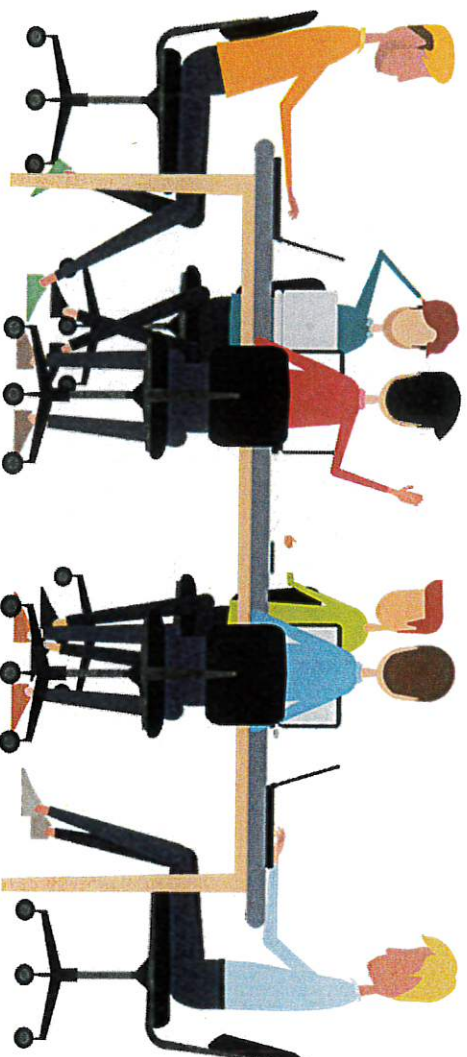


## Expenditure Highlights (Continued)

- The County still has American Rescue Plan funding available, which must be obligated by December 31, 2024. The Commissioners recommend that \$434,130 in capital expenses be taken from ARPA funds in fiscal year 2025 rather than included in the budget.

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The Executive Committee of the Delegation – will meet on 6/7, 6/10, 6/14, and 6/17 to deliberate and make their final recommendations, and the full Delegation will meet on June 24, 2024, at 9:00 AM to vote on the FY 2025 Grafton County Budget. For more information regarding these meetings please visit [www.co.grafton.nh.us](http://www.co.grafton.nh.us).



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We would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank our elected officials, department heads and all of our employees for all of their hard work during the past year. You continue to provide outstanding services to the citizens of Grafton County. You have all done an amazing job!

Grafton County is dedicated to maintaining a high level of professionalism, safety and care throughout all departments while continuing to be conscious of our obligations to provide services and to be respectful of the impact on taxpayers.

*Thank  
You*