

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
October 1, 2024

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

OTHERS: HR Director Clough, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, DoC Supt. Lethbridge, Farm Manager Libby, Katie Hedberg, Nick De Mayo – via Teams.

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

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

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

Health Insurance – HR Director Clough discussed the public hearing she attended at Health Trust. She stated that the rates would be issued differently. The County will not receive a GMR. The rates will be set in October, there will no longer be a revisit in the spring with the possibility of rates going down. She stated that this will give the County a longer period to look into options if need be. HR Director Clough stated that Health Trust has said that for their July groups, some are looking at a rate reduction, or some will see as high as a 19% increase, but the average is 9%. Commissioner Piper asked what the reason was for this change. HR Director Clough explained that Health Trust has seen a lot of financial strain from COVID. There was \$53 million in return on surplus in those two (2) COVID years, and since then, Health Trust has not been able to make up the capital reserve funds that they need to have to help keep them sustainable with their claims. Health Trust explained that if they were to give a GMR, that would be the maximum rate at which they could increase the premium. In the last couple of years, the claims in the last quarter have been substantial, driving the rates up higher than the GMR they were quoting. Until the volatility of claims settles down, Health Trust felt it was not a good financial decision to keep giving the GMRs.

Commissioner McLeod asked for the public in attendance about the intermittent FMLA. HR Director Clough explained that FMLA is a federal law and employees who have been with the County for a year are entitled to twelve (12) weeks in a rolling year. Intermittent leaves are generally used for chronic conditions that flare up or the need to take care of a family member.

Commissioner Piper noted that she was very happy with the supervisor training, which was well attended. HR Director Clough stated that she is trying to put together a training program for new supervisors that she will bring to the Commissioners, and she hopes to make it mandatory for all new supervisors coming in.

Agenda Items:

1. The Commissioners signed check registers 1042-1046; 2024-09.27.24.

NHA Labore arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

Commissioner Ahern expressed concern about the length of time it takes for someone to apply to get into the Nursing Home and then be admitted. NHA Labore stated that individual circumstances vary, and that can affect how long it takes for someone to get admitted to the Nursing Home.

1. COVID Outbreak Update – NHA Labore reported that the outbreak is mainly on the Meadow and Profile units, with one (1) case on Granite. They currently have twenty (25) active cases of resident COVID and eighteen (18) staff cases. He noted that, for the most part, all residents are doing fine, with the exception of one (1). He is hopeful that the cases will slow down. They are required to report this to public health when more than three (3) cases are linked together and the Nursing Home is then assigned a case worker to monitor the outbreak.

2. Steam Kettle Replacement – NHA Labore stated that this is an unplanned purchase. The steam kettle in the kitchen has produced black soot over the hood in the kitchen and has grown worse over the last two (2) months. It is producing carbon monoxide, creating a safety risk for the staff, and the Maintenance Department took it out of operation. He stated that he is requesting to purchase a new one out of the capital reserve account. He received the following three (3) quotes:

- Singer Kittredge - \$26,190.39
- Webstaurant Store - \$31,695.00
- Katom Restaurant Supply - \$ 31,695.00

Supt. Oakes was present for the discussion and added that this has been getting progressively worse. He stated that this equipment has never been great regarding getting the gas and air ratios just right. It has been on the radar to be replaced, possibly in FY26. CA Libby stated that this is a two (2) part request, as the full Delegation has to approve the capital reserve request, so they will need to convene a full Delegation meeting as well. NHA Labore stated that the kitchen can hold out until the Delegation is able to meet. CA Libby noted that they may be able to convene an emergency meeting, allowing them to hold a meeting virtually.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to accept the Nursing Home Administrator’s request to purchase a VG30 Tilting Skillet Braising Pan for a total purchase price of \$26,190.39. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said “yes,” Commissioner McLeod said “yes,” and Commissioner Piper said “yes.” With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

3. Bid Waiver Request – NHA Labore stated that they received formal notification of the award for the federal congressionally directed funding request associated with the landscape project for

the Activities and Therapy courtyards. He stated that the first step in the process is to get contractors lined up so bid documents can be put together and sent out. NHA Labore requested a bid waiver to award the contracts to Jay Miller Landscape Architect, Horizons Engineering and Engineering Services of Vermont. He explained that Jay Miller is the landscape architect that the County has worked with since 2022, when discussions of redesigning the Nursing Home began. Jay Miller has done good work in the front of the Nursing Home and has been easy to work with. He has designed a great plan for the Nursing Home that would make it functional for residents and staff. NHA Labore noted that Jay Miller has already been consulting Horizons Engineering and Engineering Services of Vermont regarding the project.

Commissioner Ahern asked about possible fruit trees being planted as part of this project. Commissioner McLeod expressed concerns about fruit trees in this particular space, as she feels apples would create a mess and it might not be safe for residents to walk with apples on the ground. NHA Labore said he would talk to Jay Miller about the possibility and get his input.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to accept the Nursing Home Administrator's request to waive the competitive bidding process and award architectural and engineering services totaling \$21,960.00 (total includes a 20% contingency fee) to Jay Miller Landscape Architecture; Horizons Engineering and Engineering Services of Vermont. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said "yes," Commissioner McLeod said "yes," and Commissioner Piper said "yes." With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

3. Public Letter Regarding Nursing Home Credit Card Use – NHA Labore stated that the Commissioners received a letter regarding the Nursing Home credit card use. He reported that it has been looked into with CA Libby's assistance, and they do not believe there is anything illegal going on, but there was an opportunity to tighten up the policy on credit card use, and he has implemented some new policies to tighten up purchasing in the Nursing Home. Commissioner Piper noted that all three (3) Commissioners received an anonymous letter regarding this, and she is glad NHA Labore and CA Libby took the time to review this to ensure they have accountability and transparency. She added that anonymous complaints are received differently, instead of someone putting a name behind the concern, and because of that, she is not surprised that the findings were as they were.

Campus Security Position Discussion – NHA Labore, Supt. Lethbridge, Farm Manager Libby, Maintenance Supt. Oakes.

CA Libby stated that the Commissioners met in August and discussed the position presented to them. They felt it was important to follow up with the department heads to learn what this job entails. She stated that the Commissioners had discussed the possibility of moving the nightwatchmen position around and repurposing the funds.

NHA Labore explained that a requirement of CMS is to have an Emergency Preparedness and Response plan in place, which became effective in 2017. The nursing home is paper-compliant with this regulation, but it could be more proactive. He discussed an incident that occurred in

June of this year when a resident on Meadow became severely agitated and took one of the LNAs hostage in their room for over an hour. He explained that this created a significant event and was traumatic to the LNA. He will use this event for his live drill this year, but he cannot always rely on incidents like this happening every year. The expectation is to have drills to test all of their plans. NHA Labore added that there are 107 pages worth of plans that are in place, and staff are supposed to know how to respond to all of those incidents, but he does not have the time to do all of these drills to the extent that he or CMS would like to see. This position would allow the Nursing Home to ensure the staff is trained for their safety and the safety of the residents as well. This position would allow these plans, as written right now, possibly redeveloped, to train staff across all three (3) shifts, get feedback, and coordinate with outside agencies. There are other 24/7 departments in the complex, and these plans could also be replicated in those departments.

Commissioner Ahern said he does not feel this should be discussed in public session. Commissioner Piper noted that she does not agree with that as it stands now. She feels this is an important discussion that the public should hear. Commissioner McLeod stated that she is fine with moving forward. Commissioner Ahern noted for the record that he requested this discussion be in a nonpublic session moving forward.

Supt. Oakes added that he does not have any concerns and feels this is something that is needed. FM Libby stated that he thinks it is long overdue for this to happen, but not at the expense of the nightwatchmen, as they are very important to the County. He stated that for the overall safety of the campus, he thinks eliminating the nightwatchmen would not be the best idea. CA Libby stated they had discussed eliminating the nightwatchmen position and moving the funding to cover it. The nightwatchmen have coverage four (4) nights a week, and the jail does tours of the barns the nights there are no nightwatchmen. There is roughly \$80,000 in the nightwatchmen budget. At this point, if they were going to look at this as a possibility, they should look at a January 1st date and give them three (3) months to figure the numbers out. She stated that she could also look at keeping the nightwatchmen and finding out where funding could come from for this new position.

Supt. Lethbridge stated that this change would less impact the DoC but could see the Nursing Home needing this position. The DoC wants to be part of the solution, and however they could work with this new position, they would do so. If the County had no nightwatchmen, the DoC could do checks seven (7) nights a week, but it would not be as many times a night as the farm would like. They would not be a replacement for the nightwatchmen, but they could help. He stated that he would also suggest an experience replacement requirement rather than just a degree, as this position may require someone with the needed experience. Commissioner McLeod noted that she appreciates that suggestion as it helps with diversity. Commissioner Ahern stated that he has questions but will not ask them in an open meeting.

MOTION: * 10:26 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into a non-public session for the purpose of consideration of matters relating to the preparation for and the carrying out of emergency functions, including training to carry out such functions, developed by local or state safety officials that are directly intended to thwart a deliberate act that is

intended to result in widespread or severe damage to property or widespread injury or loss of life according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (i). Commissioner McLeod 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." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

*10:34 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 McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern "Yes," Commissioner McLeod "yes," Commissioner Piper "yes." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes," and the motion passed.

Commissioner Piper asked if CA Libby wanted the Commissioners to make a decision today regarding this position. CA Libby stated that if the Commissioners came to a consensus today, she could prepare a financial proposal for this position to present to the board.

Commissioner Piper stated that this will probably be a 2-1 vote. She is very happy that the Nursing Home is compliant with CMS regulations. They know CMS has rigorous regulations, and if the nursing home is compliant, she is confident that the staff will work with outside agencies and resolve issues. These are tight times, and she is proud of the budget they put together. Commissioner Piper noted that there were large discussions about costs and picking up extra lines. Given the budget discussions, it does not seem to her that this is the year for the County government to acquire another new position. There is a department that the Commissioners, Executive Committee, and Delegation have been sustaining for a long time that operates at a loss. The County is in a position where if the Commissioners were to give something they may need to take something away as well. They have had serious comments from the Delegation regarding the Farm and how long they are going to subsidize the Farm. Given the circumstances at this time, she will not support this new position as she does not see a need for it. Commissioner Ahern asked, "how much is one life worth". Commissioner McLeod stated that she intends to support it and feels it is long overdue. She thinks it is important to provide a safe place to live for the residents and employees to work, but she also understands what Commissioner Piper is saying. Commissioner Piper stated that there is a majority consensus to have CA Libby put together a financial proposal for this position.

Agenda Items:

1. CA Libby submitted the following CDBG Drawdown Requests for Commissioner Piper's signature.

CEDC - \$8,148.91

GRDC - \$3,922.32

2. The Commissioners signed the Livermore MS-535 form.

3. The Commissioners opened bids for the sale of one (1) 2020 Ford F-150 Police Responder. Three (3) bids received as follows:

Ringwood Motors - \$ 6,285.00

Bay Ridge Motors - \$ 4,505.00

US Auto Group - \$ 6,298.00

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to accept USA Auto Group's high bid of \$6,298.00. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said "yes," Commissioner McLeod said "yes," and Commissioner Piper said "yes." With three (3) votes in favor and none in opposition, the motion passed.

3. Follow-up Housing Discussion – CA Libby stated she wanted a follow-up discussion after last week's meeting with H. Kanzler from AHEAD and A. Winters from Twin Pines. CA Libby stated that AHEAD's proposal on downpayment assistance is good, and the County can help a lot of Grafton County citizens. Commissioner McLeod agreed but noted that she is on the Board of AHEAD and would recuse herself from voting. CA Libby stated she was not as excited about funding a startup project with Twin Pines, which is risky. AHEAD came to them with a concrete proposal for a program that is already in place in Coos County. Commissioner Piper stated that she was impressed with AHEAD as well. She asked if they would want to discuss helping Twin Pines with their rental properties. CA Libby noted that she would have to look closely at the ARPA guidelines. She stated that she could ask for formal proposals from Twin Pines to get more information but noted that the downpayment assistance is allowed under ARPA. Commissioner Piper stated that she is extremely comfortable with AHEAD. She added that Rep. Rochefort has been very interested in affordable housing and suggested that the County contact the BEA. She asked if they should ask that agency for information as well. CA Libby stated that the program that Rep. Rochefort spoke of is already an ARPA-funded program through the state, and they have already obligated their funds. She stated that AS Director Mitchell is also working on housing through ARPA, working in conjunction with community mental health centers. She is unsure what that looks like but feels that before they make any final decisions, the Commissioners should hear from AS Director Mitchell. She noted that there are also requests from the towns of Wentworth and Dorchester. The Commissioners further discussed the housing situation and agreed to have CA Libby reach out to Twin Pines for a formal proposal, noting that they already know the proposal from AHEAD. CA Libby stated that they would do that, and they would have a follow-up discussion in a few weeks.

4. Complaint from Cooperative Extension & Response – Commissioner Piper stated that the Commissioners received a complaint from UNH Cooperative Extension. She noted that the County was privileged to have students from Iowa State University visit UNH Extension and the Farm operation. Commissioner Piper read the following complaint:

9/26/24 – A.M. Extension Office

Office conversations with Kelly from Deeds to Teresa and Kris

Kelly Monahan from Deeds approached Teresa while she was at the mailbox. She started complaining about some Iowa cars that were parked out front and that those spaces should be reserved for Deeds and HR only (there were still 2 open spots). Teresa explained that we had a group of Iowa State students visiting as guests to meet with Heather Bryant and Jim Frohn. She told Teresa that they should have parked on the side of the building, not out front. She stated that she had gone down the hall twice to talk to Kris Vaughan but she was on the phone. Teresa then walked away to disengage the conversation and went back to her office.

After that conversation, Kelly came down the hallway again in an attempt to speak to Kris. Kris was still on the phone, so Kelly went back down the hallway towards Deeds. When Kris hung up from her call Kelly quickly returned and pointed to Kris through the glass, motioning for her to come out of her office into the hallway. Kris went out and followed her down the hall toward the bathroom area. Kelly again pointed to the cars out the window and complained about them taking parking spaces and that they shouldn't be there. Kris explained that they were guests and were only expected to be inside for a short time this morning before leaving to go out onto county property with Heather and Jim. Kris mentioned that it was raining when they arrived so maybe that is why they parked out front in the visitor parking area. Kris also told Kelly that if there was a policy about restrictive parking out front, she wasn't aware of it. Kelly's voice kept getting louder and more animated as she spoke to Kris in the hallway outside the bathroom. At that time, several of the Iowa students walked out of the bathroom and apologized to Kris for parking out front. Kris said that it was fine and that we can all share the parking spaces. After that the head of the group came to Kris to again apologize for causing issues with them parking out front.

People in our office are well acquainted with Kelly's outbursts and rants and often will ignore her after she has spoken her mind. Today, however, Kelly's outburst impacted our clientele and guests that were here at the County office to see and observe the relationship that Extension has with the county, and the work that Heather and Jim do.

I don't know what can be done, but Kelly's outbursts are unacceptable and very unprofessional, especially in front of clients and guests that we welcome to our office. It is my hope that this will not happen again and that Kelly will be made aware that our office is not interested in listening to rude conversations that are insulting to others.

Thank you for taking the time to review my complaint.

*Donna Lee
County Office Administrator
UNH Cooperative Extension - Grafton*

Commissioner Piper requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 11:09 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into a non-public session for the purpose 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 McLeod 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." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

*11:25 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 "yes," Commissioner Piper "yes." Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes," and the motion passed.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to accept the recommendations for responding to the complaint they received. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern said "yes," Commissioner McLeod said "yes," and Commissioner Piper said "yes." With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passed.

5. CA Libby reminded the Commissioners that the Annual Report write-up and dedication are due next Tuesday, the 8th.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner McLeod stated that the County is continuing to try and figure out how to get WMUR back on the channel lineup. She stated that this is a large issue, and they will work to see if they can address it.

Public Comment—N. De Mayo stated that he thinks Commissioner McLeod needs to recuse herself from any votes regarding AHEAD as she is on the Board. He also noted that he thinks the County should consider retired Veterans for the Campus Security position.

11:32 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 October 1, 2024

HR Activity Report (09/03/2024-09/30/2024)

• ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	1 (1 PT)	1 PT Dietary Aide
Corrections	2 (2 FT)	2 FT CO
Sheriff's Dept.	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Dispatcher

Separations

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home	2 (2 FT)	1 FT Housekeeper, 1 FT RN
County Atty's Office	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Legal Asst.
Corrections	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Cook
Maintenance	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Licensed Mntce Asst. (Electrician)

Reasons:

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason-
- Termination –
- Deceased -
- New job/career change – 4
- Relocated –
- School –
- Retirement – 1
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 PT LNA to FT LNA

Active Leave of Absences between September 3rd to present

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home – Nursing	12	(10 are intermittent, 9 for self, 3 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	9	(7 are intermittent, 5 for family, 4 self)
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	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Department of Corrections	1	(1 Self)
TOTAL	29	

Scheduled to orient 10/02

1 Per Diem RN

1 PT Dietary Aide

1 FT Alt. Sentencing Case Manager

Current Jobs posted/advertised

LNA's/Unit Aides (21.35 FTE's vacant)

RN/LPN (11.85 FTE's vacant combined)

ADON

CO's (4 FTE's)

Housekeepers – 1 PT

Dietary Aide

RN – DOC (1 FTE's)

Cook - DOC

Skilled Maintenance Asst. (HVAC technician or Licensed Gas fitter)

Deputy

Dispatcher

County Attorney's Office Legal Assistant

Activity Aide

Other business: Primex Supervisor training had 26 supervisors attend. Attended Retiree education session in Lincoln for on transition to Medicare Advantage, Attended Public Hearing at HealthTrust – no GMR's rates will be issued in October for next fiscal year, Attended Plymouth State Healthcare Career Fair.

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: October 1, 2024

Census

Medicare: 8
NH Medicaid: 63 (5 Pending)
VT. Medicaid: 17 (1 Pending)
VA: 7
Hospice: 3
Private: 16
Total: 114

FY '25 Budgeted Census

Medicare: 3
NH Medicaid: 69
VT. Medicaid: 20
VA: 7
Hospice: 0
Private: 17
Budgeted Census: 116

Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 6
Deceased Residents: 4
Discharges: 0

Other Topics:

- 1) COVID Outbreak Update
- 2) Memo Requests
- 3) Public Letter Regarding Nursing Home Credit Card Use