

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
November 6th, 2024

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

OTHERS: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Register Monahan, Alternative Sentencing Director Mitchell

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

CA Libby stated that HR Director Clough could not attend the meeting, but she submitted the following report (* see attached).

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the October 29th meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the October 29th meeting. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers: 1060-1061.

3. The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Inspection Report from their October 22nd inspection, and Commissioner Piper signed off on the letter.

Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived and gave the following report:(*see attached)

1. 10/31/24 County/State Finance Committee Meeting – NHA Labore stated that DHHS presented their anticipated budget, which reflects a 6% increase in the county cap. He discussed details from that meeting and answered questions from the Commissioners.

2. Barriers to Hospital Discharge Discussion –
- November 14th Nursing Home Activities Room – 9 am

Agenda Items:

1. Wildfire Response & Fire Management Plan—CA Libby stated that the Board of Commissioners needs to approve this plan, and she is following up with them to see if they need any further information.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to approve the Wildfire Response & Fire Management Plan for the Grafton County Farm and woodlands. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners opened bids for the sale of a Valmetal Mixer Wagon from the Farm. There was a \$3,500 minimum bid. One (1) bid was received as follows:

Liberty Hill Farm - \$3,600

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to accept Liberty Hill Farm's bid of \$3,600. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

3. Director of Emergency Preparedness and Campus Security Position – CA Libby stated that she had previously told the Board of Commissioners that she would prepare financial numbers for this position. She presented the attached spreadsheet and reviewed it with the Commissioners, noting that the total cost for the position that would be fully funded in FY26 would be roughly \$130,000, and that does not take into consideration if this person comes up with ideas to implement various security measures throughout the campus. Commissioner Piper stated that she understands the arguments for the position and appreciates the research, but she feels this is a want versus a need, and she cannot support adding another salary line. Commissioner McLeod stated that she supports the position. Commissioner Ahern stated that he feels they need to wait. He stated that there are other ways that safety can be implemented without spending this amount of money. Commissioner Ahern stated that he appreciates CA Libby putting this information together for them.

Register Monahan arrived to discuss the future location of the Register of Deeds Office.

Register Monahan stated that she believes this decision is premature. She noted that they have done a great deal of work on the vault over the last year and a half, including the Maintenance Department picking up their minor end, and she has invited the Executive Committee on the 19th to view the changes. Register Monahan explained that in conjunction with how much money she has saved in the surcharge, she would like to refurbish the environmental controls and avoid a move to the new Courthouse. She stated that moving would disrupt the flow of her office and business. This move is still two (2) years away, and they will have to struggle with their lack of security issues. She would like a mindset shift from the Delegation on the definition of equipment. She stated that when she went for the nonaqueous fire suppression system in her first (2) budgets, Rep. Ladd stated that his definition of equipment includes non-attached, so it could not be attributed to capital improvements, and she is willing to argue that with the new Delegation. The performance audit that the County spent \$40,000 on showed they have been out of compliance with best practices for storing historical paper. She stated that the environmental controls were turned off when she was in here one humid weekend. When she went to find someone in Maintenance, she hollered down the hall looking for someone and was asked not to come down the hall, that they would be out. She then heard them manually turn the environmental controls back on. She asks what happens on the weekends if those controls are being shut off to save electricity. Register Monahan stated that when her employee had to remove the old index books from the racks, they were swollen in from the humidity.

Register Monahan stated that she would like to use some of her funds, which do not affect the taxpayer, to upgrade their vault. She would like eyes on the work they have done to improve storage. She thinks it would add a great deal of expense to the Courthouse to include her office, and it would disrupt their office. She noted that her staff and the public are comfortable where they are. She has questions about the security and environmental controls.

Commissioner Piper stated that the upgrades to the vault would secure the documents but asked about personal security; she felt Register Monahan made a convincing case regarding her staff's security to move her office to the new courthouse. Register Monahan stated that it should be a consideration because they are a security risk. She has been talking to IT about them being a security risk coming onto the domain because she gets emails from the public that she has to respond to. She is concerned about security for the entire complex and has been for fourteen (14) years, but they are working through it. She feels they should marinate on this for a while. Commissioner Piper asked Register Monahan if it was correct that given the extra security that a move to the courthouse could make, it would not be worth the disruption and the cost to the office. Register Monahan stated that it would not. Register Monahan stated that she is insecure about how many former employees have keys to everything. She would like a card key for their whole department so they can increase security while decreasing the number of people that can come through.

Commissioner Ahern stated that the security in a new courthouse, with a metal detector and officers, would be better than in this building, and he expected most attorneys to understand that. His first dealings with the Register of Deeds Office were in the Courthouse. He noted that most people handle their business from home on their computers. Register Monahan stated that they hardly see anyone anymore, especially attorneys. They do not see anyone. They will see a random person from the public doing historical work. Register Monahan stated that she wants to present this two (2) fold project. She wants to turn her research room into a new historical society and assemble a museum. She stated that they see people once in a while, and their research room used to be a networking hub, but they do not see people anymore because they are staying home.

Commissioner McLeod stated that a new delegation is coming and that there may be a new Board of Commissioners. Register Monahan stated that she knows they have to have funds obligated by the end of the year, but she would like to wait. Commissioner McLeod asked what the impact would be on the work from the RFP that was sent out. CA Libby stated that on the 19th, the Building Committee will meet with the Commissioners to present their recommendations for selecting an architectural firm. The plan is to have a contract in place with that firm by the second week of December. The architect's first two (2) months of work are meeting with the occupants of the building and understanding their needs. CA Libby stated that by mid-December, they would need to decide what they would like to do. By January, they will meet with all of the departments going into the Courthouse.

Commissioner Issues

1. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is having concerns about approving the \$1 million in ARPA funding for AHEAD. He would like to hear what the Alternative Sentencing Director has

to say. He is having second thoughts and doubts about whether he is making the best use of ARPA funds. AHEAD has other ways of receiving funding, and he feels the County can use that money elsewhere. He would like to ask for a reconsideration of that vote.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to reconsider the vote and not approve it.

Commissioner Piper stated that she thought this program would be good for helping 40 families as the Commissioners are concerned about housing. She felt that AHEAD made a very strong case for funding. She asked if Commissioner Ahern could be more specific about his concerns. Commissioner Ahern stated that the new Governor is going to do a lot to take care of housing issues in New Hampshire. He is concerned about the type of people that make up those 40 families under this program. He worries about the decision-making process and where those 40 families are coming from. CA Libby stated that these are low to middle-income workforce families trying to make a living in Grafton County. They have to live and work in Grafton County. Commissioner McLeod stated that she does not intend to make or second a motion. CA Libby noted that AS Director Mitchell is asking for a completely different population than the one they are trying to help with in this workforce housing program through AHEAD. She stated that they have talked about how important housing is in Grafton County, and this is a different conversation than they had. Commissioner Piper asked Commissioner Ahern if he wanted to be more specific regarding his concerns about the vetting process of the participants who would be selected. The Commissioners further discussed Commissioner Ahern's concerns regarding funding the AHEAD program with ARPA funding.

Commissioner Piper stated that she sees a tremendous need for workforce housing, and AHEAD has a strong record of working with people. She also stated that she has not heard any specific comment about the pool of people who receive these awards. She cannot second the motion. There was no second to Commissioner Ahern's motion.

AS Director Mitchell arrived to discuss her ARPA request.

AS Director Mitchell stated that the SIM Committee she is on is for transitional housing for mental health disorders involved in the criminal justice system. She has been collaborating with other agencies to see what they could put together for emergency housing. She hopes to use ARPA funding to start something and go from there. She stated that White Mountain Mental Health, West Central Behavioral Health, and Stepping Stones are all involved in their meetings, and they are working on finding other sources of funding to fill in the gaps. The City of Lebanon has contracts with local hotels to provide housing when needed. She stated that she has not connected with the hotels yet because they want to know what they have to work with. AS Director Mitchell stated that the County can pay as they go for the hotel rooms, rather than paying to put rooms on hold, which the Commissioners had expressed concerns about doing. She asked if the money could be obligated to this program or idea and let them then work out the details. CA Libby stated that she has researched and read that they can have an Intergovernmental Memorandum of Understanding.

Commissioner Piper stated that she is happy with the program being changed to paying as needed, and she asked about the rates of the hotel rooms. AS Director Mitchell stated that she

would look into the rates. Commissioner Piper noted that she would think, given these are rooms that are otherwise not being sold, she does not think the County would have to pay the market rate, and AS Director Mitchell stated that that is their goal. Commissioner Ahern stated that he thinks the County needs to provide this type of program. AS Director Mitchell stated that if they can make this work and collaborate, other ideas are being looked at down the road, but right now, they are looking for an immediate fix for the winter. The Commissioners further discussed AS Director Mitchell's request and agreed to assign a dollar figure of \$300,000 to the concept of this program.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to use \$300,000 in ARPA funds for transitional housing as arranged by Alternative Sentencing. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Agenda Items:

1. CA Libby stated that she would like to propose setting a small amount of ARPA funding aside to cover hiring an attorney to work through the FCC Market Modification process for the WMUR issue. She stated that she does not have the expertise to handle this and would like to hire an attorney to assist with that, but she noted that the legal line has been expended for this fiscal year. Set aside \$50,000 for legal expenses.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to spend up to \$50,000 in ARPA funding to hire an attorney to file a Stelar Market Modification to ensure constituents get WMUR TV. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. CA Libby stated that roughly \$500,000 in ARPA funds were not obligated. Commissioner Piper stated that they have requests from the towns, but she worries about funding those towns without putting out an application for all of them. CA Libby stated that the Commissioners could put out the solicitation as they did for the first round and receive proposals from the communities. She would note that there are limited funds available. CA Libby stated that the last round of funding, they had twenty (20) towns apply. The Commissioners further discussed and agreed to allocate the remaining \$500,000 in ARPA funds to the municipalities.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to make \$500,000 available to the municipalities in Grafton County. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

CA Libby noted that towns will have to make specific requests for funding.

2. IGT Agreements—CA Libby stated that the County has received the Intergovernmental Transfer agreement from the State of NH for the funds paid for the county cap. CA Libby said the document has been reviewed and is ready for signature and requested the Commissioners give her the authority to execute the document.

MOTION: Commissioner McLeod moved to authorize CA Libby to executive the Intergovernmental Transfer Agreement (IGT) with the State of NH for Fiscal Year 2025. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

11:12 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Martha S. McLeod".

Martha S. McLeod, Clerk

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: November 6, 2024

Census

Medicare: 12
NH Medicaid: 64 (4 Pending)
VT. Medicaid: 12 (2 Pending)
VA: 6
Hospice: 2
Private: 18
Total Census: 116

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: 15
Deceased Residents: 2
Discharges: 8

Other Topics:

- 1) 10/31/24 County/State Finance Committee Mtg.
- 2) Barriers to Hospital Discharge Discussion
 - November 14th Nursing Home Activities Room – 9am

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 November 6, 2024

HR Activity Report (09/30/2024 through 11/06/2024)

• ***New Hires***

Department	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home	11 (3 FT, 3 Per Diem, 5 PT)	4 PT Dietary Aide, 1 FT RN, 2 FT Activity Aides, 2 PD RN, 1 PD LNA, 1 PT Housekeeper
Alternative Sent.	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Case Manager

Separations

Departments	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home	3 (2 FT, 1 PT)	1 FT Dietary Aide, 1 FT Activity Aide, 1 PT Dietary Aid
County Atty's Office	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Asst. County Attorney

Reasons:

- Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 2
- Termination –
- Deceased -
- New job/career change – 1
- Relocated –
- School –
- Retirement – 1
- Not Reappointed -
- Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 PD LNA to FT LNA, 1 FT LNA to PD, 1 FT LNA to 4/5, 2 PD LNA's to 3/5 1 FT MNA to PD, 1 FT Laundry Aide to FT Housekeeper, 2 PT Dietary Aide to FT, 1 PT Dietary Aide to PD LNA, 1 FT Activity Aide to FT Housekeeper, 1 PT Dispatcher to FT Dispatcher, 1 FT LNA to Restorative Aia

Active Leave of Absences between September 30th to present

Department	#	
Nursing Home – Nursing	13	(10 are intermittent, 9 for self, 4 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	10	(7 are intermittent, 7 for family, 3 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)
Maintenance	1	(1 self)
Alternative Sentencing	1	(1 intermittent, 1 family)
Department of Corrections	2	(1 intermittent, 2 self)
TOTAL	32	