

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
September 23, 2024

PRESENT: Reps. Sykes, Baldwin, Rochefort, Bolton, Stringham, Sellers – via Teams, Morse – via Teams, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Ahern, County Administrator Libby, Assistant County Administrator Burbank, Administrative Assistant Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Register Monahan, Treasurer Hill, Nick De Mayo.

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Rep. Sykes stated that the first item of business to take care of was approval of the minutes from the May 20th Delegation meeting, June 14th and June 17th Executive Committee meetings and the June 24th Delegation meeting.

MOTION: Rep. Baldwin moved to approve the minutes from the May 20th Delegation meeting, June 14th, June 17th Executive Committee meetings and the June 24th Delegation meeting. Rep. Stringham seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Rochefort “abstain”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With five (5) votes in favor, none in opposition and one (1) abstention the motion passes.

Commissioner Piper gave the following Commissioner’s Report:

Commissioners’ Report
September 23, 2024

Staffing Update:

- Overall, the County has hired twenty-one (21) new employees since July 1, 2024. Our total employee count is back up to over 400 for the first time in quite some time. We currently have 405 total employees. We have hired sixteen (16) new employees at the nursing home. This has brought our vacancies for LNA’s down to 21.65 FTEs. In July 2023, that number was 39.85 FTEs; we have made very good progress! RNs and LPNs continue to be more of a challenge as we have not hired any new ones in a few months and are still at 10.95 vacant FTEs. We did hire 6.10 FTEs in fiscal year 2024. We hired two (2) staff in the maintenance department and three (3) staff at the DoC. We currently have six (6) vacant correctional officer positions, but some hires are scheduled for September.
- We began another LNA class in August. The class has eight (8) students and is scheduled to be completed in November. Once the students are licensed, there are expected to be eight (8) fewer LNA vacancies. Our per diem nurse is teaching this class as she did the

previous one. We have hired a new Restorative Nurse Coordinator who is also an LNA Instructor, and we hope to start another LNA class under her in October.

- Since July 2023, we have reduced the contracted staff. We currently have six (6) LPNs, down from eleven (11) in July 2023, and nine (9) LNAs, down from seventeen (17) in July 2023. Once again, very good progress! A total of \$4,280,891 was spent on contract staffing in the fiscal year 2023; in fiscal year 2024, we spent \$2,703,573, a reduction of \$1,577,318.
- We continue to see improvements in staffing in the areas with the highest vacancy rates. We receive applications for LNAs and Correctional Officers regularly and will continue our recruitment and retention efforts to reduce our vacancy numbers.

Nursing Home:

- The nursing home's census is currently 110; of that census, 16 are Vermont Medicaid residents.

Department of Corrections:

- The current in-house census is 73, with another 53 out of the facility. We have 26 in pretrial services, 15 in other facilities, and 12 in Electronic Monitoring (9 are pre-trial services being electronically monitored, and 3 are in the EM/FIRRM program).

Cyber Security Update:

- On September 4, 2024, the County, through SNS, deployed the last piece of Multi-factor Authentication to further tighten security for its IT system. All employees and vendors accessing the County's network remotely, including accessing email from a mobile device or a home computer, must now complete MFA. This was the final phase to complete this project.
- The County is also in the final phases of developing our Cybersecurity Incident Response Plan, which will be shared with department heads. The plan will then be fine-tuned through a tabletop exercise, giving department heads a road map in the case of a cybersecurity attack.

Broadband Update:

- On September 5th, Grafton County released an RFP to find Internet Service Providers to partner with to operate and support the middle mile network! Proposals are due on October 4, 2024, at which time we will review all proposals and work with the Broadband Committee to determine which ISPs we will work with in the future. The RFP can be found on the County's website at <https://www.co.grafton.nh.us/request-for-proposals/>
- We have been in the Environmental Assessment phase of the project since early this year. We have had to break the project into two (2) separate projects due to some issues with the White Mountain National Forest approval process. So, we now have three (3) sections

labeled Non-WMNF and four (4) sections labeled White Mountain National Forest. The Non-WMNF Environmental Assessment is complete and has been approved. We can now start with "Make-Ready" in those sections. Towns included in the first three (3) sections that will be constructed are:

- Non-WMNF
 - Alexandria Town Hall
 - Grafton Town Office
 - Groton Town Office
 - Lisbon Town Office
 - Lyman Town Office
 - Orange Town Office
 - Monroe Town Office

- These sections represent approximately 30% of the total project. Still, the WMNF sections could take up to another 250 days before approval is granted (we have had some insight from the Forest Service that this will be much less - likely sometime this fall, but they have 250 more days.) Nothing has been able to be completed during this time, so it is very exciting that we now at least have some sections that will be ready to begin construction in the next few months, depending on how long the make-ready takes.

Courthouse Update:

- On August 29, 2024, the County issued a Request for Qualifications to retain the professional services of a qualified A&E Consultant for the conceptual design of an approximately 60,000 square-foot courthouse building that will be located at the current Grafton County Complex in North Haverhill, NH. The RFP can be found on the County's website at <https://www.co.grafton.nh.us/request-for-proposals/>. Qualification proposals are due on October 4, 2024. At that time, the Courthouse Building Committee will review the proposals received, and based on qualifications, will select three (3) firms to submit formal proposals due on October 25, 2024. Interviews will be held during the last week of October, and a recommendation will be made to the full Board of Commissioners at a Commissioners meeting in November so that a fully executed contract will be in place by mid-December to meet the ARPA obligation deadline.

Opioid Abatement Funds:

- Because Grafton County filed its own lawsuit against opioid companies, state law provides that the County receive a proportional share of 15% from each opioid payment. See RSA 126-A:83. Since May 2021, we have received seven (7) separate payments. Recently, a number of defendant opioid companies have made payments under their multi-state agreements with state attorneys general. Grafton County is scheduled to receive another payment of \$120,566.34. This brings the total payments the County has received to \$927,091.56. It is worth noting that, with this payment, the 23 qualifying jurisdictions have received over \$14 million.
- The County has spent \$23,952.38 in Opioid Abatement funds to date. We have spent \$4,476.90 on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) at the Department of Corrections. The Commissioners also authorized Alternative Sentencing to spend up to \$25,000 for

Opioid addicted participants needing assistance. Once in recovery, clients can have a hard time getting their life back on track due to barriers created during the time they were actively using. These funds are used to purchase gift cards for food, gas, or work clothing. They are also being used to cover costs that a participant incurred that will be a detriment to their well-being and recovery if not paid. They have spent \$19,475.48 to date.

American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:

- Grafton County received \$17.4M in ARPA funding. Thus far, eighty-eight (88) ARPA projects have been approved by the Commissioners and Executive Committee. These projects are in different phases; many have been completed, and others are ongoing. All funds are required to be obligated by December 31, 2024. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) defines an obligation as an order for property or services or the creation of contracts, subawards, or other similar transactions that require payment. Funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024. ARPA regulations require local governments to return grant funding that remains unobligated beyond the December 2024 end-of-year deadline to the U.S. Department of Treasury.
- We have approximately \$1.8M in unobligated funds. The Commissioners are working on a plan to obligate the remaining funds and will present it to the Executive Committee by the November 18th meeting.

Commissioner Piper answered questions from the Committee.

MOTION: Rep. Bolton moved to approve the Commissioners’ Report. Rep. Rochefort seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Rochefort “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With seven (7) votes in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Treasurer Hill arrived via Teams and gave the following Treasurer’s Report:

TO: GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FROM: KAREN LIOT HILL, TREASURER
SUBJECT: TREASURER’S REPORT
DATE: SEPTEMBER 23, 2024



CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 08/31/2024)

Grafton County General Fund

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.80%)	\$ 2,233,437.23 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Investment Account Money Market (5.32%)	\$ 629,967.63 (NH Public Deposit Investment Pool)
Investment Account (ICS @ 5.13%)	\$ 36,026.91 (Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account (6Mo. CD @ 5.00%)	\$ 8,235.99 (TD Bank)

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Investment Account ICS @ 4.80%)	\$	16,147.95 (Bank of NH)
Investment Account (ICS @ 4.45%)	\$	58,067.27 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Account (ICS @ 4.50%)	\$	24,096.53 (Northway Bank)
Investment Account (ICS (4.25%))	\$	5,185.82 (Franklin Savings Bank) Investment
Investment Account (26Wk CDARS @ 5.10%)	\$	1,000.00 (Bar Harbor Bank & Trust)

Grafton County Reserved/Dedicated Accounts

Deeds Surcharge ICS (5.00%)	\$	284,115.03 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve ICS (5.00%)	\$	83,800.18 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (5.10%)	\$	698,579.31 (Northway Bank)
Northway Money Market	\$	58.23 (Northway Bank)
American Rescue Plans Funds (4.80%)	\$	4,663,800.61 (Bank of NH)
NTIA Letter of Credit ICS (4.80%)	\$	4,446,502.96 (Bank of NH)

RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the previous fiscal year (7/1/23-6/30/24) was \$688,979.26.
- The combined accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/2024 – 08/31/2024) is \$43,521.91.
 - FY 2025 Tax Anticipation Notes:
The Delegation authorized the borrowing of up to seven (7) million dollars at the Delegation meeting on June 24, 2024. Six (6) proposals were received for the TANs for FY 25. I have attached a spreadsheet detailing the banks that were sent the RFP and the response received, if any. This spreadsheet shows the various different proposals and requirements that the different financial institutions provided. Based on the bids received, I recommended that we accept the proposal from Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank at 4.125% for our FY 2025 Tax Anticipation needs.
- On September 17, 2024, the Commissioners approved the proposal from Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank for a line of credit up to \$7M at a rate of 4.125%.
- Tax bills are expected to go out in late October, with the due date being December 17th.

MOTION: Rep. Baldwin moved to approve the Treasurer’s Report. Rep. Stringham seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Morse “yes”, Rep. Rochefort “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With seven (7) votes in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

CA Libby gave the following County Administrators Report:

County Administrator’s Report
September 23, 2024

Financial Reports

- ❖ Cash Management Report – This report shows where the county’s funds are invested. This includes operational monies and reserve accounts. Due to having money tied up securing our Letter of Credit for the Broadband grant and the significant reduction in ProShare monies received this year, our current cash position is low. As you heard from the Treasurer, we will borrow TANs this year.
- ❖ The Monthly Variance Report compares the budget to actuals on an equal monthly basis and looks at the positive (black) or negative (red) variances. These reports represent two (2) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2025 YTD Actuals
Medicaid	89	80
Medicare	3	4
Private Pay	17	17
Veterans	7	7
Total	116	108

- The nursing home's census is off over the first three months for a couple of reasons. First, we have been struggling to keep up with deceased residents and discharges back to the community. In the first three months, 11 residents have passed away, and we have had 5 residents discharged back to the community. Secondly, quite a few referrals we receive do not have a payer source attached. Medicaid paperwork may be submitted, but it's not approved yet, which creates a delay because we want to make sure it will be approved before we commit to taking the admission. The other financial consideration pertains to people having Medicare Advantage plans that we are not considered “in-network.” Because of this, the plan will not authorize admission to our home. The nursing home is working on admissions with a couple planned this week and anticipates the census will increase. Since we are averaging eight (8) residents below our projected census, combined with our Medicaid rate being set at \$3.79 per day below our budgeted rate, we see a \$203,991 negative revenue variance through August.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly.
- The Department of Corrections is showing a negative variance currently. This is primarily due to the timing of Bureau of Drug and Alcohol (BDAS) grant funds.

- The farm and the Sheriff's Department are showing an unfavorable variance.
- County Attorney/Victim Witness. These grants are direct reimbursements for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly.
- The Register of Deeds revenue shows a favorable variance of \$53,341.41.
- Interest Income shows an unfavorable variance of \$31,528 due to less cash currently invested.

Revenue tends to start slowly at the start of each fiscal year. I anticipate that we will start to see improvement in the coming months.

Expenses

- Through two (2) months, the variance report shows many departments with negative variances. August was a three-payroll month, which skews the monthly numbers. They are all minimal and should fall back in line as the year progresses. There are also sizeable annual service contracts, and our Workers' Comp and Property Liability premiums are paid in full at the beginning of the fiscal year. The bonded debt line shows a negative variance because the only bond payment for the fiscal year was made on July 1st.
- ❖ Pro-rated Report: This report looks at the percentage of the year completed and then pro-rates revenues and expenses based on known variations in revenues and expenses.
 - 16.67% of the fiscal year completed. On the pro-rated report, I factor in the revenue and expenses that are either over or under at this point in the fiscal year. Based on the August reports, we are at 16.07%, below revenue by \$306,229, and at 16.88% or over-expended by \$120,000.
- ❖ Over Expenditure Report – This report shows any over-expended line item at month-end.
 - The report has two (2) accounts—one (1) of which is a posting error, leaving only one (1) account over expended by \$30.00.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham to approve the County Administrator's Report. Rep. Bolton seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Bolton "yes", Rep. Morse "yes", Rep. Rochefort "yes", Rep. Sellers "yes", Rep. Stringham "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes". With seven (7) votes in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

New Business:

Next Meeting Date – November 18th at 9:00AM

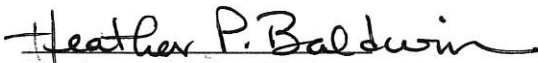
Comments from the Delegates – Rep. Sellers asked if it is possible to use ARPA funds for workforce housing. Rep. Sykes stated that before Rep. Sellers signed online the Commissioners

had stated that they are looking into housing with various agencies and are waiting to hear back from them.

Comments from the Public - Register Monahan provided a copy of the news release for the Register of Deeds Open House on October 9th. Register Monahan then discussed HB 68 that went into effect and adopts the uniform real property transfer on death act. She explained how this bill is an issue, what their concerns are with it and how her office is dealing with it. She stated that her office has been leaving copies of the law at the counter for the public and noted that they always recommend that people speak with a lawyer.

9:49 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk