

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
January 14, 2025

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

OTHERS: Farm Manager Libby, County Attorney Hornick, Register Monahan, Sheriff Myers, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Rep. Barton – via Teams, Jeffrey Mealey – via Teams, Omer C. Ahern Jr. – Via Teams

Commissioner McLeod called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Farm Manager Libby arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

Commissioner McLeod asked what the Farm is like during the cold winter days and if the cows stay warm. FM Libby explained that the body heat of all the animals helps keep them warm but noted that the cold weather is rough on the Farm equipment.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the January 8th meeting. Commissioner Hedberg had the following edit:

Page 3, Paragraph 2 – Commissioner Hedberg changed the sentence “Depending on their GPA, Grafton County will pay 100% of the program's cost, noting that a GPA of 3.5 or higher will” to read “Grafton County will pay up to 100% of the program's cost depending on the GPA. A GPA of 3.5 or higher will qualify for the 100% rate.”

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1096 & 1097.

3. CA Libby explained that the County receives a grant from the Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Services for substance abuse treatment at the Department of Corrections and Alternative Sentencing. The contract is being amended to add next year's funding, and the Commissioners would need to vote to approve the certificate of authority.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to certify that Julie Libby is the County Administrator and allow her to enter the BDAS contract and sign any necessary documents. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4. Commissioner McLeod signed the following CDBG Drawdown Requests:

- WREN - \$32,675.97
- GRDC - \$75,303.22

- BEDC - \$1,811.61
- CEDC - \$15,102.51
- WEDCO - \$13,891.80

Atty. Hornick arrived and gave the following update:

Atty. Hornick asked about the opioid abatement funds and how they are being utilized. CA Libby explained that she plans to have a more in-depth conversation about those funds and how they will use them. That conversation will include the County Attorney's Office, Alternative Sentencing, the Department of Corrections, and the Sheriff's Department.

Atty. Hornick reported that their office is still missing a prosecutor. She has been talking to the Lebanon police Chief, and they are looking for a part-time Circuit Court prosecutor. Atty. Hornick stated that she could split the payment of a prosecutor with the City of Lebanon. It would be great to train in the Lebanon Court and help the County Attorney's Office as well. The experience of a Circuit Court Prosecutor is very important. She noted that the Lebanon Police Chief was approved to contract a part-time prosecutor.

Atty. Hornick stated that she would like to replace the full-time prosecutor they lost in September with a part-time prosecutor and see if they could make it work. She is requesting permission to hire someone part-time and is considering splitting it with the City of Lebanon to allow that person to be trained in Circuit Court out of the Lebanon Police Department. CA Libby asked if the County would take the person on full-time, be responsible for benefits, and then be reimbursed for half of that position from the City of Lebanon. Atty. Hornick stated that was correct.

Commissioner Piper stated that ARPA funds have been utilized to support the position that has been vacant since September. Atty. Hornick confirmed that ARPA funds were paying for a prosecutor. Commissioner McLeod noted that ARPA funds were approved for the prosecutor position because of the backlog of cases due to COVID. Commissioner Piper stated that it seems as though Atty. Hornick is saying that even though ARPA funding is gone, she still needs the additional person and is asking for a new position without the ARPA funding. Commissioner Piper asked Atty. Hornick why she still needed the position if the original reason was to help with the backlog of cases. Atty. Hornick explained that the number of cases and complexity have not leveled off as she thought. She would not have asked for this if the cases had leveled off. The need for this prosecutor is still there; she hopes this part-time person will help.

Commissioner McLeod asked what is currently available in the budget. CA Libby explained that Atty. Hornick has the funding available in the budget and could do this now with no impact, as she currently has a full-time position budgeted for that has not been filled. The impact would be in the FY26 budget. Atty. Hornick stated that she could advertise for this position now, hoping that the Commissioners approve it in the FY26 budget. Commissioner Piper noted that she does not feel comfortable promising that the Commissioners will agree to this in the upcoming budget without seeing the budget. She is also uncomfortable bringing someone on board and saying they would not be employed in the next budget. Commissioner McLeod stated that Atty. Hornick should manage her own budget, and if she wants to hire someone with the risk that they might

not be funded in the following budget, she will have to make that decision. It is her responsibility as the County Attorney to manage this budget. Commissioner Piper stated that she thought this was a good point, and to support what Commissioner McLeod said, she explained that the Commissioners have heard from County Attorney Hornick about running out of ARPA funds since they were first granted, and the Commissioners have heard County Attorney Hornick advocating for the Commissioners to grant a future request employment request without the ARPA funds available. She likes what Commissioner McLeod said. It is Atty. Hornick's responsibility to manage her department. Commissioner Piper stated that she does not know that "planting a seed" for this idea will be productive for Atty. Hornick, and she feels strongly that Atty. Hornick may be able to hire someone and then have to let them go. Atty. Hornick stated that she appreciates the Commissioners' feedback, which gives her something to think about. She noted that she feels it is essential to let the Commissioners know where they are in her office by planting the seed.

Atty. Hornick noted that they are starting a jury trial on Friday the 24th and she invited the Commissioners to attend and see what they do.

Register Monahan arrived.

Register Monahan stated that she has not reported monthly for two (2) years, and there is a lot to bring the Commissioners up to speed on, specifically Commissioner Hedberg. She gave the Commissioners copies of the statutes that pertain to her office. She also discussed the Deeds Surcharge account, noting that by planning appropriately and stretching the life cycle of equipment, she has been able to save up money in that account for larger upcoming projects. She also noted that with the ARPA funding, she could do many projects that other Register of Deeds had to take a bond out to complete. Register Monahan stated there had been a dispute around the definition of the word "equipment" with the surcharge account. There is a cap on the fund, and it cannot exceed \$500,000. She further discussed the surcharge account and stated that the definition of "equipment" may be something the County wants to look into with their attorney. Register Monahan noted that she would also like to explore the definition of "equipment" and other uses for her surcharge account.

Register Monahan stated that she would like to meet with the Commissioners in the next two (2) - three (3) weeks to discuss the vault, problems with the accountability of the Maintenance Department, and promotions for her staff. She stated that this meeting was an orientation meeting to get to know what the department is about.

Register Monahan then reviewed the following report with the Commissioners (* see attached). She discussed some of the challenges they face in their office but noted that their morale is good. They are a well-oiled machine.

Commissioner McLeod noted that this report is very useful information for the Commissioners.

Register Monahan stated that regarding Commissioner Hedberg's previous comment on the state downshifting done to the counties over the years, she scolded the Delegation/Executive Committee on searching for new revenue streams in January. She explained that when she first

took office, her predecessor signed an agreement, against the warning of the Register of Deeds staff, with UNH and DRA to form a GIS integration unit with the County Register of Deeds Offices and DRA. She stated that she was skeptical and held the project up for two (2) years. Since then, this has been the foundation for the state's equalization program that sets all tax rates. She said they were not thanked for that or spoken to about compensation. The Counties provide this information seamlessly at no cost and the county taxpayer bares the cost in the Deed's software contract line. This is something the Registers of Deeds has never been recognized for.

Register Monahan reported that Fidlar is now becoming an e-recording company and discussed that with the Commissioners.

Register Monahan noted that five (5) Registers have been replaced. Their first affiliate meeting is on the 29th, and as of right now, they do not anticipate any difficult legislation. Register Monahan did note the LSR that is out there for five (5) Grafton County Commissioners. She stated that there is a proposal for Grafton County to be divided into five (5) districts instead of the current three (3) and revert back to two (2) year terms. She stated that she feels this point is very valid.

Agenda Items:

1. CA Libby submitted the tentative budget meeting schedule for the Commissioners to review.
2. MRI – Warren/Wentworth Ambulance – CA Libby stated that Commissioner Hedberg had emailed her asking what the next steps were after the Commissioners' meeting with the Warren/Wentworth Ambulance. Commissioner McLeod stated that Don Bliss, from MRI, was in attendance at that meeting and other approaches could be looked at for ambulance services. His initial suggestion was to do some quick assessments for the towns to see who has resources and who needs resources. The Commissioners further discussed this and agreed to have Don Bliss attend one of their meetings to discuss this with them. CA Libby stated that she would reach out to him and get him on the agenda.
3. Appropriation Transfers – CA Libby reviewed a list of appropriation transfers totaling \$12,488.00 with the Commissioners.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the appropriation transfers totaling \$12,488.00. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Public Comment – N. De Mayo stated that there is still a lot of mumbling and those who are speaking are not clearly being heard.

Agenda Items:

MOTION: * 10:21 AM Commissioner Piper moved to enter into a non-public session for the purpose 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).

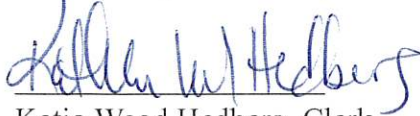
Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner McLeod called the roll. Commissioner Piper said, "Yes", Commissioner Hedberg said, "Yes," and Commissioner McLeod said, "Yes." Commissioner McLeod stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

* 10:41 AM Commissioner McLeod declared the meeting back in public session.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg 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 Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner McLeod called the roll. Commissioner Piper "Yes," Commissioner Hedberg "yes," Commissioner McLeod "yes." Commissioner McLeod stated that a majority of the board voted "yes," and the motion passed.

12:00 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Wood Hedberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

January 14, 2025

Commissioners Report

1. Milking 60 – shipping 8800
2. Basically milking cows – keeping up with Winter chores and planning for Spring

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Libby, Interim Farm Manager



Grafton County New Hampshire
Register of Deeds

Kelley J. Monahan/Register

3855 Dartmouth College Hwy., Box 4 • North Haverhill, NH 03774

Tel: 603-787-6971 ~ Fax: 603-787-2363

kmonahan@co.grafton.nh.us

www.nhdeeds.com



December 2024
Revenue

Recording Fees:	\$ 31,791.00
Copy Fees:	5,792.00
Ava & Tapestry:	2,720.00
Transfer Tax:	1,442,599.00
DP3 Commission:	13.00
LCHIP:	22,725.00
Document Surcharge:	2,452.00
Postage:	217.52
Escrow:	-1,020.04
	\$1,507,289.48

Distribution of Revenue

<u>Grafton County</u>		<u>State of New Hampshire</u>	
Recording Fees:	\$31,791.00		
Copy Fees:	5,792.00		
Ava & Tapestry:	2,720.00		
Postage:	217.52		
Escrow:	-1,020.04		
Total	\$39,500.48		
Transfer Tax (4%):	57,703.96	Transfer Tax(96%):	\$1,384,895.04
DP Commission:	13.00		
LCHIP (4%):	909.00	LCHIP(96%):	21,816.00
	<u>\$ 98,126.44</u>		<u>\$1,406,711.04</u>
Surcharge:	2,452.00		
County Total:	\$ 100,578.44	State Total:	\$1,406,711.04