

GRAFTON COUNTY DELEGATION REORGANIZATION MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

December 9, 2024

PRESENT: see the attached sign-in sheet

Rep. Sykes called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and began with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Rep. Fracht.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll for attendance. Rep. Almy "here", Rep. Baldwin "here", Rep. Barton "here"(via Teams) Rep. Beaulier "here", Rep. Berezny "here", Rep. Bjelobrk "here", Rep. Bolton "here", Rep. Cormen "here", Rep. Fellows "here", Rep. Fracht "here", Rep. Franz "here," Rep. Hakken-Phillips "here" (via Teams), Rep. Lovett "here", Rep. McFarlane "here" (via Teams), Rep. Muirhead "here", Rep. Lucas "here", Rep. Opper "here", Rep. Rockmore "here," Rep. Sellers "here", Rep. Spahr "here," Rep. Stavis "here", Rep. Stringham "here", Rep. Sullivan "here" (via Teams), Rep. Sykes "here". Twenty (20) members were physically present, with an additional four (4) participating via Teams, and a quorum was declared.

NOMINATION: Rep. Muirhead nominated Rep. Sykes for Chair, Rep. Sellers for Vice-Chair, and Rep. Baldwin for Clerk of the Grafton County Delegation. Rep. Cormen seconded the nomination. Rep. Sykes closed nominations. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy "yes," Rep. Baldwin "yes"; Rep. Barton "no," Rep. Beaulier "yes," Rep. Berezny "yes," Rep. Bjelobrk "yes"; Rep. Bolton "yes"; Rep. Cormen "yes," Rep. Fellows "yes," Rep. Fracht "yes," Rep. Franz "yes," Rep. Hakken-Phillips "yes," Rep. Lovett "yes," Rep. McFarlane "yes," Rep. Muirhead "yes," Rep. Lucas "yes," Rep. Opper "yes," Rep. Rockmore "yes," Rep. Sellers "yes," Rep. Spahr "yes," Rep. Stavis "yes", Rep. Stringham "yes," Rep. Sullivan "yes," Rep. Sykes "yes."

Rep. Sykes stated that there appeared to be some confusion about what was being voted for. Therefore, before he closed the roll call vote for those online, he clarified that they are voting to accept the election for the slate of officers as presented by nomination.

The nominations are accepted with twenty-three (23) votes in favor and one (1) in opposition.

Rep. Sykes stated that he would open nominations for the Executive Committee of the Delegation.

NOMINATION: Rep. Spahr nominated Rep. Sykes, Rep. Sellers, Rep. Baldwin, Rep. Bjelobrk, Rep. Bolton, Rep. Franz, Rep. Opper, Rep. Spahr and Rep. Stringham. Rep. Muirhead seconded the nomination.

Discussion: Rep. Sykes asked if there were any other nominations. Rep. Barton nominated himself to be on the Executive Committee. There was not a second to nominate Rep. Barton to the Executive Committee. Rep. Barton stated that nominations do not see a second. Rep. Sykes stated that he disagreed, as they have always had seconds

in the legislature for nominations. Rep. Barton appealed the decision of the chair. Rep. Sykes stated that his decision stands. Rep. Barton stated that they are not using Mason's Rules. They are using Roberts's Rules. Rep. McFarlane stated that Rep. Barton is appealing the decision of the chair and that is a matter than needs to be put to a roll-call vote. Rep. Sykes stated that is not the case in the legislature. It would be a question of the speaker and if his decision is challenged, he would make that ruling. Rep. McFarlane appealed the decision that a valid appeal from the decision of the chairman does not require to be put to a vote of the body.

MOTION: Rep. Oppel moved to accept the chair's ruling that a second for nominations is required. Rep. Stavis seconded the motion.

Discussion: CA Libby stated that under Roberts Rules, a motion relating to nominations must be seconded. Rep. Beaulier asked if they have not voted to adopt the bylaws yet, are they still operating under the previous set of bylaws, which are Roberts Rules. Rep. Sykes stated that was correct, which states they need a second for nominations. Rep. McFarlane stated that if he knows that they have not yet adopted the rules and they are subject to customary parliamentary procedure and if he further knows that both under Roberts Rules of Order and under customary parliamentary procedure, nominations are proposals and do not need a second, would he then vote in opposition to the ruling of the chair. Rep. Sykes stated that he has the option to vote against the ruling of the chair at any time.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy “yes”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Barton “no”, Rep. Beaulier “yes”, Rep. Berezchny “yes”, Rep. Bjelobrk “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Cormen “yes”, Rep. Fellows “yes”, Rep. Fracht “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Hakken-Phillips “yes”, Rep. Lovett “yes”, Rep. McFarlane “no”, Rep. Muirhead “yes”, Rep. Lucas “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Rockmore “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stavis “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty-two (22) in favor and two (2) in opposition, the motion passes.

Rep. Sykes stated that the next order of business is nominations for the nine (9) members of the Executive Committee. Rep. Stringham asked what the breakout of the nine (9) nominees by party is and how that compares to the number of each party in the Delegation. Rep. Sykes stated that six (6) Democrats and three (3) Republicans were nominated for the Executive Committee, which is where the split should be. A motion has been made and seconded to nominate Rep. Sykes, Rep. Sellers, Rep. Baldwin, Rep. Bjelobrk, Rep. Bolton, Rep. Franz, Rep. Oppel, Rep. Spahr, and Rep. Stringham to the Executive Committee, and he asked Rep. Baldwin to call the roll.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll on the nomination for Executive Committee members. Rep. Almy “yes”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Barton “no”, Rep. Beaulier “yes”, Rep. Berezchny “yes”, Rep. Bjelobrk “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Cormen “yes”, Rep. Fellows “yes”, Rep. Fracht “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Hakken-Phillips “yes”, Rep. Lovett “yes”,

Rep. McFarlane “yes”, Rep. Muirhead “yes”, Rep. Lucas “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Rockmore “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stavis “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty-three (23) in favor and one (1) in opposition, the nominations are accepted.

Rep. Sykes stated that the Executive Committee members only will now nominate their Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Clerk.

NOMINATION: Rep. Stringham nominated Rep. Sykes for Chairman, Rep. Sellers as Vice-Chair, and Rep. Baldwin for Clerk of the Executive Committee. Rep. Muirhead seconded the nominations.

Discussion: Rep. Barton asked if the Executive Committee meets on its own. Rep. Sykes stated that they do meet separately, but not today. Those meetings are noticed and open to the public. Rep. Barton asked why the Executive Committee can’t elect their officers at their meeting. Rep. Sykes stated that it is on the agenda and what they have always done. This is the most efficient way to do so and meets all the rules. Rep. Sykes noted that only the Executive Committee members vote on this nomination.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Bjelobrk “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being nine (9) in favor and none in opposition the nominations are accepted.

Bylaws Discussion

MOTION: Rep. Barton moved to table the bylaws. Rep. Hakken-Phillips seconded the motion. Rep. Hakken-Phillips withdrew her second, stating that she misunderstood the motion. Rep. McFarlane seconded the motion long enough to hear why Rep. Barton wanted to make this motion.

Discussion: Rep. Barton stated that he has had insufficient time to review the bylaws as he just received them.

Rep. McFarlane withdrew his second.

MOTION: Rep. Almy moved to adopt the bylaws as written. Rep. Oppel seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Almy stated that, together with Rep. Ladd, they wrote the first bylaws that any County had because they ran into legal problems with someone who thought they should be doing things differently. She explained that they spent a lot of time preparing them. She believes they have made one minor amendment over the years. The bylaws have held up well and prevented legal trouble. Rep. Sykes noted that other counties have also adopted Grafton County’s bylaws.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy “yes”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Barton “no”, Rep. Beaulier “yes”, Rep. Berezchny “yes”, Rep. Bjelobrk “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Cormen “yes”, Rep. Fellows “yes”, Rep. Fracht “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Hakken-Phillips “yes”, Rep. Lovett “yes”, Rep. McFarlane “yes”, Rep. Muirhead “yes”, Rep. Lucas “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Rockmore “yes”, Rep. Sellers “yes”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stavis “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty-three (23) in favor and one (1) in opposition, the motion passes.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Piper welcomed the representatives as Chair of the Board of Commissioners and stated that the Commissioners look forward to working with Delegation members. She noted that County Government is home to two (2) very important functions, in the Department of Corrections and Nursing Home. She stated that the Delegation will do important work as they ultimately approve the County budget.

County Administrator Remarks

CA Libby introduced herself, Assistant CA Elsholz, and Administrative Assistant Norcross to the Delegation and stated that she was there to answer any questions that anyone had.

New Business

Capital Reserve Account Requests – CA Libby explained that the County has a Dispatch Capital Reserve Account, a Nursing Home Reserve Account, and a Register of Deeds Surcharge account, which are all dedicated accounts that require authorization from the Commissioners and whole Delegation to spend funds. She stated that typically, the expenditures are identified during the budget process and are voted on with the budget, but there have been two (2) instances this fiscal year where the need has come up to request funds from the capital reserve accounts outside of that normal process. She explained that in September, the Nursing Home identified a piece of equipment that needed replacement, and rather than convening the Delegation, they decided to wait until this meeting to make the request. The second request from the Dispatch Capital Reserve just was approved by the Commissioners last week. She noted that these purchases do not impact the tax rate and that the next meeting of the Delegation will not be until the 4th Monday in June.

1. Dispatch – Director of Communications Paronto stated that he is requesting to spend up to \$48,000 from their reserve funds to upgrade their software for their land mobile radio system upgrade, keeping them in line with the New Hampshire Department of Safety system. Grafton County is the first County ever to be a part of the State of New Hampshire’s system, and this request is to keep Grafton County aligned with that system. He explained that the issue he ran into was that he was not aware of the date of the cutover, and this is why the expenditure request is coming now instead of waiting until June.

Director Paronto was asked how many counties in the State of New Hampshire do not have this system. He explained that eight (8) counties have county run public safety Dispatch Centers. Coos County and Sullivan County do not. Of the eight (8) counties with LMR systems, Grafton County was the first to join the State's core, providing extremely good redundancy. He noted that three (3) counties are negotiating with the state to join. The trend in the next five (5) years will be to join the system, as it allows the County not to hold the expense of the server upgrades. They only have to do software upgrades. Rep. McFarlane stated that it was not clear to him what the functionality or other characteristics of this software upgrade were that caused the County to want to make this upgrade. He stated that he understands that it stays in line with the State of New Hampshire, but it is unclear what they are achieving. Rep. McFarlane also noted that the invoice presented to them has several cryptic line items, including hardware, which does not sound like a software upgrade. Director Paronto explained that it is not why they want to do this upgrade, but they need to do this upgrade. The County is part of the state's Motorola Core Software for the radio system. This upgrade is needed to stay online with their public safety radio system. In response to Rep. McFarlane's second question, Director Paronto explained that the upgrade includes a few gateway items, which are back-end radio system equipment. The list is as complete as possible and the software is the main component. They are not replacing radios; they are replacing the backend pieces for the system. Rep. McFarlane stated that he has not seen enough detail to understand what it is they would be purchasing, what the hardware and software pieces are. Director Paronto read the following statement from the vendor:

“The equipment being replaced was close to 20 years old and no longer supported. The state went with Motorola MCC series consoles and G Series stations spread out over 32 sites statewide. Grafton County also purchased MCC series consoles starting in 2014. Merrimack, Cheshire, Hillsborough, Belknap, Rockingham, and Carroll Counties did the same. Then the state purchased the M Core system from Motorola, which is extremely large and can support a significant amount of handheld and mobile devices. The state CORE, which is the resource for sharing and allowing access for featuring and distributing and back-up dispatch centers and Smart Connect with the goal of “statewide” interoperability. Grafton was the first to join the CORE in 2021. Belknap, Cheshire and Hillsborough will be next, followed by Rockingham County. The switchover was at no charge. The new systems used by the State and the Counties are software/IP based, much like the phone systems. For that reason, users are expected to upgrade at least every 4 years to the latest software release. When Grafton joined the CORE, they were at release a.2021. The State is planning to upgrade again in March of 2025 to software release a.2024. Although there is no charge to be on the CORE, any agency that wants to be on the M CORE must upgrade their own EQ at the same time as the state.

Director Paronto stated that this is the vendor's justification for what they refer to as the software upgrade to stay in line with the state.

Rep. McFarlane clarified that as part of the system that the state runs, the County has an IP connectivity between their Dispatch system and the State. Director Paronto stated that the County has an IP and Microwave connectivity. Rep. McFarlane stated that one of the reasons he

is asking about this is because he has been inquiring about the E911 budget at the state level. His understanding is that a lot of the costs for the state's equipment is handled out of a 911 service charge. He asked if there is any documentation that they should refer to, to understand what the agreement is as to the split between County and State expenditures on these items. Director Paronto stated that he was at the quarterly E911 Commission meeting in Concord and the way that the State is set up, is the E911 surcharge is not dispersed to the local municipalities or county government. The surcharge does fund some of the NH Department of Safety systems but he would be speaking out of context if he stated that it was a part of this funding. He does not know the answer to that.

Rep. Stavis asked how often these software upgrades are needed. Director Paronto stated that the general rule by the vendor is every four (4) years.

MOTION: Rep. Cormen moved to approve spending up to \$48,000 from the Dispatch Capital Reserve Account for the Motorola Radio System upgrade to stay in line with the State of New Hampshire. Rep. Stavis seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy "yes", Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Barton "yes", Rep. Beaulier "no", Rep. Berezhny "yes", Rep. Bjelobrk "yes", Rep. Bolton "yes", Rep. Cormen "yes", Rep. Fellows "yes", Rep. Fracht "yes", Rep. Franz "yes", Rep. Hakken-Phillips "yes", Rep. Lovett "yes", Rep. McFarlane "yes", Rep. Muirhead "yes", Rep. Lucas "yes", Rep. Opper "yes", Rep. Rockmore "yes", Rep. Sellers "yes", Rep. Spahr "yes", Rep. Stavis "yes", Rep. Sullivan "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes". With the vote being twenty-two (22) in favor and one (1) in opposition, the motion passes.

2. Nursing Home Capital Reserve Request – NHA Labore stated that he had a planned replacement of this piece of equipment for the upcoming fiscal year. He explained that this piece of equipment is twenty-two (22) years old and has been producing soot over the hood system over the years, but beginning in July, it began producing a large amount of soot, or CO2 and was creating health issues with staff. The Maintenance Department red-tagged it, and they have been without that equipment for food production for the last three (3) months. They are proposing a purchase of a Vulcan VG30 Tilting Skillet Braising Pan. This equipment differs from the steam kettle, but it will enhance its food production program by allowing the Dietary Department to use it more than the previous steam kettle would allow. Not having this equipment in operation has created inefficiency within the department, but they have been limping along.

Rep. Fellows asked how many residents are currently being fed. NHA Labore reported that they currently had a census of 118. Rep. Fracht stated that the prime use of this piece of equipment is to produce hot water for pureeing food. He asked why they need a \$26,000 machine to heat hot water. NHA Labore explained that it is primarily what the equipment is used for right now but over the years it has been used for other various purposes with food production. He stated that it is like a very large crockpot. As the equipment has become older and less efficient, the dietary department has been primarily using it to puree foods. NHA Labore added that he is unable to give an exact number of residents on a puree diet in the Nursing Home, but out of the 118 residents he would say roughly 40%. Rep. Bjelobrk asked if makes soup and if the majority of

residents have soup with their meal. NHA Labore stated that not everyone has it at every meal but it is offered. Rep. Barton asked how this is an emergency since the request was originally raised in September and it is now December. He also asked why alternative systems have not been considered in the bidding process. CA Libby stated, with regard to the term “emergency”, she used that wording because it is an out of cycle, not a part of their normal process request. It was not included in the current budget and needs approval as a special consideration. NHA Labore stated that with regard to alternative systems, this is piece of equipment is something that their Dietary Director is very familiar with, as he used it at another facility. It is something that is used at Sullivan County Nursing Home. The feedback from both Grafton County Dietary Department and the Sullivan County Dietary Department, is that this is something that would be a benefit to the Nursing Home. NHA Labore added that they did solicit quotes from two (2) other sources, in addition to Singer Kittredge. Rep. Sellers asked if there is another piece of equipment that can do the same job for less money. NHA Labore said there was not. The idea with this tilting skillet is that it will diversify what they are able to do, creating more efficiency within the department. Rep. Sellers asked if this was the Cadillac, Mercedes Benz or the Toyota, is there another brand that might do the same job for less money. NHA Labore stated that the Vulcan VG30 Tilting Skillet Braising Pan is what was recommended. They did not source other pieces of equipment to see if there was a more competitive price. Rep. Stavis asked CA Libby if there are any county rules that require competitive bidding process for capital equipment. CA Libby stated that there were three (3) quotes received for this piece of equipment and this request was for the lowest bid.

MOTION: Rep. Almy moved to approve the request for emergency expenditure from the Nursing Home Capital Reserve Account for \$26,190.39 for the purchase of the Vulcan VG30 Tilting Skillett Braising Pan. Rep. McFarlane seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Almy “yes”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Barton “yes”, Rep. Beaulier “no”, Rep. Berezhny “yes”, Rep. Bjelobrk “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Cormen “yes”, Rep. Fellows “yes”, Rep. Fracht “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Hakken-Phillips “yes”, Rep. Lovett “yes”, Rep. McFarlane “yes”, Rep. Muirhead “yes”, Rep. Lucas “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Rockmore “yes”, Rep. Sellers “no”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stavis “yes”, Rep. Sullivan “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being twenty-one (21) in favor and two (2) in opposition, the motion passes.

Comments of the Delegates

Rep. Beaulier asked if there would be a desire to have these meetings at a time other than 9 am on Mondays, as many of them have busy schedules and work. Rep. Sykes stated that Mondays are typical because they do not interfere with other meetings and committees the Representatives have in Concord throughout the week. Rep. Fellows stated that historically, Mondays are saved for local meetings as they do not interfere with meetings in Concord. Rep. Sellers noted that the Delegation will only meet three (3) times over the next two (2) years. The consensus was to leave the Delegation meetings at 9 am.

Rep. Sykes stated that he is very passionate about County Government and appreciates the support as Chairman of the Delegation for the next two (2) years. They do a lot of important work in County government, and while it is the smallest portion of the property tax bill, it has a much heavier impact on citizens than the bills might suggest. He noted the importance of having quorums for their meetings so they could conduct their business.

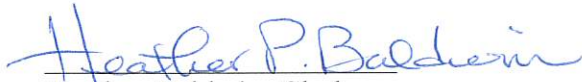
Rep. Sykes stated that the next Executive Committee meeting is January 27th at 9 am. He noted that five (5) members need to be present in the room and online participation does not count towards the quorum.

Public Comment

1. Register Monahan read the attached letter.
2. Nick DeMayo stated that members of the public online cannot always understand what is being said and asked that the Delegation speak clearly to be heard.

10:26 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk

Delegation Meeting December 9th, 2024



Sign In Sheet ~ **PLEASE PRINT**

1 Jerry Stringham
2 George Lykes
3 Susan Almy
4 ~~Joe Doyne~~
5 Terry Spahr
6 LAUREL SOKIS
7 Sallie Holloway
8 Bill Bolton
9 Peter Lovett
10 Linda Franz
11 Jovit Lucas
12 Thomas Cormen
13 Heather P. Baldwin
14 Ellen Rockmore
15 John Sellers
16 Marie Bjeldbrk
17 Lex Berezny
18 CALVIN BEAULIER
19 David Fracht
20 Russell Muirhead
21 Julie Zubby
22 Sam Orvoss
23 Wendy Poper
24 Martha McLeod
25 Omer C. Ahern Jr - via Teams
26 Donald McFarlane - via Teams
27 Kelley Monahan
28 Thayer Pivanto
29 Craig Labore
30 Joseph Barton - via teams

31 Mary Harkhen-Phillips- via teams
32 Jared Sullivan- via Teams
33 Nick DeMayo- via Teams
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**Grafton County New Hampshire
Register of Deeds**

Kelley J. Monahan/Register

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December 5, 2024

To: The Grafton County Delegation

Having followed Grafton County Government for 25 years as a taxpayer and concerned citizen, and now having served Grafton County for 14 years as a Constitutional Officer in my role as Register of Deeds, I have studied the operation from outside and from within. I respectfully request that the elected members of our House of Representatives consider the following suggestions for improving the communication with the public and for the protection of our assets.

1. Establishing a YouTube channel dedicated to broadcasting all public meetings. Other New Hampshire counties have provided this service for years.
2. To utilize the tools available with AI Artificial Intelligence for drafting minutes. This will eliminate the human element and the temptation for any agenda pushing bias.
3. Reconsider the stipend for attendance at Executive Committee meetings to encourage regular attendance.
4. Establish a protocol where the Executive Committee and the other Delegation members are fully informed of the agenda items and provided any informational materials seven days prior to the meetings to increase awareness and allow time for analysis before the meeting.
5. Reestablish former policy where each member of the Executive Committee chooses a Department to act as a liaison for and to form a deeper understanding of the complexities of that department in order to build a stronger and more efficient budgeting process.
6. Attempt to avoid any big decision making during the last meetings in June, to avoid withholding any actions taken from public scrutiny until the following meeting in late September when the minutes are then approved and finally published.
7. Establish policy where minutes must be published to the website the day that they are approved.
8. Mandate Cybersecurity training for any new Treasurer.

I will be presenting this document to the new Board of Commissioners at their first meeting in January.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley Monahan Grafton County Register of Deeds