

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

February 4, 2025

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

OTHERS: NHA Labore, Alan Gould and Don Bliss, Municipal Resources (MRI), Register Monahan – via Teams, Omer C. Ahern Jr. – via Teams, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Robert Guida – via Teams, Janice Novak – via Teams, Chad Miller, Littleton Fire Chief and Sheriff Myers.

Commissioner McLeod called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

HR Director Clough submitted the following report (* see attached)

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the January 28th meeting.

Commissioner Piper had a couple of minor grammatical corrections:

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the minutes from the January 28th meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 2025-01.17.2025; 1104-1108; 2025-01.31.2025.

3. Haverhill Police Department has submitted a request to the County to provide funding from the Opioid Abatement funds for Tru-Narc Unlimited Model with solution kit. Commissioner McLeod stated that the Commissioners discussed doing this on a regional basis. Commissioner Hedberg suggested that if we are purchasing one (1) for the Jail and Sheriff's Department to use, perhaps Haverhill could share that. The Commissioners discussed further and felt it would be best if Haverhill had their own device to use in the field. Commissioner McLeod said she would like Haverhill to identify which towns they provide mutual aid for the Commissioners. The Commissioners would like Haverhill to use this device with those towns. Commissioner Hedberg said we should ask both Littleton and Plymouth the same thing, as the intention is for those police departments to share the device as well.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve funding for a TruNarc Unlimited Model with solution kit from the County's Opioid Abatement funding to the Haverhill Police Department. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

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

NHA Labore discussed the census with the Commissioners. They discussed the Medicaid pending status and why it was taking the State of NH so long to approve these applications.

NHA Labore informed the Commissioners that there is currently a COVID outbreak at the nursing home, impacting three (3) floors. Twenty-two (22) residents and twenty (20) staff have tested positive. There are also several cases of influenza in the building. They have temporarily stopped admissions and will continue to monitor. They will do surveillance testing again tomorrow.

The State Survey Team arrived on January 29th. They were at the facility for three (3) days. NHA Labore stated that overall, the feedback was positive regarding the facility's cleanliness and the staff's knowledge of the residents. Residents surveyed indicated that they enjoyed being at the nursing home, and the feedback from their families was positive. This is all kudos to the staff. There are eight (8) or nine (9) potential deficiencies. The State took these back to review in more detail. NHA Labore stated that there were an uncharacteristic number of errors on the part of the nursing home. He said this will allow them to review processes and ensure that things are being done accurately. The final report will be issued within ten (10) days, and then they will decipher the report and compile a Plan of Correction. NHA will update the Commissioners at his next meeting.

NHA Labore requested that a position in the Business Office increase the hours from 35 hours/week to 40 hours/week. NHA explained that this request is due to an increased workload resulting from the Managed Care insurance they are dealing with for residents. They have been reviewing the responsibilities of the Business Office staff, and this increase is necessary. It will also allow them to do succession planning and give this employee more exposure to different functions within the Business Office. The position is already full-time, so there are no increased costs for benefits. The estimated expense for the rest of fiscal year 2025 is \$3,000. The estimate for next year would be an additional \$7,100. NHA Labore stated that he has spoken with CA Libby, who estimated that there are funds within the existing FY 25 budget that will cover this additional expense. Commissioner Piper asked if this request was coming from the employee. NHA Labore stated it was not. The recommendation is from him.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to increase the hours for this position from 35 hours/week to 40 hours/week. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

NHA Labore wanted to discuss the Congressionally Directed Spending for the Landscape Project with the Commissioners. This project has seen a lot of back and forth with the budget to finalize and be approved. It was finally approved just before the Executive Order from President Trump was issued. Once that was issued, the funding was frozen. Since the memo freezing federal funding has been rescinded, the project was officially approved, and funds can be drawn down. NHA Labore wants to ensure that the Commissioners would still like to move forward with this project, given the uncertainty with federal funding currently. Commissioner Piper asked if we

might have to pay back the funds if we receive them. NHA Labore stated we don't know what the future will be. Commissioner McLeod said we should get the project encumbered and draw down funds as soon as possible. She feels this is all a big threat and that we can't stop our operations. CA Libby asked when the project would be ready to be put out to bid. NHA responded that it would likely be four (4) weeks. Commissioner Piper expressed concern that the county could be left with expenses if the federal funding doesn't come through. Commissioner McLeod said that Congress approved this spending and that there would be many lawsuits. Commissioner Hedberg noted that the Commissioners must remember that their job is to serve their constituents and that we need to carry out our functions. Commissioner Piper stated that this is a landscape project, not funding for a critical service, and it has been forecasted that federal funding would be closely examined. She is concerned about moving forward with the project if we are not guaranteed federal funding. Commissioner Hedberg said she felt that we should continue to move forward with getting the project ready to be put out to bid and then reassess. Commissioner McLeod suggested having language in a contract stipulating that the agreement is null and void if the federal funding doesn't come through. Commissioner Piper was concerned that a contractor wouldn't want to sign a contract like that. At the end of the discussion, the Commissioners agreed to move forward with the project and said they would reassess it before it was put out for bid.

4. CA Libby stated that she has received a question from an agency regarding Social Service applications for Fiscal Year 2026. This agency doesn't prepare an Annual Report and has asked what information they must supply with their application. The Commissioners agreed they should fill out the original application from last year instead of the more simplified one.

5. CA Libby stated that the NHAC Legislative Conference will be in Concord on Monday, February 24th. She has already signed up Commissioners McLeod and Piper. She checked with Commissioner Hedberg to see if she would be attending. Commissioner Hedberg asked to be registered.

Alan Gould and Don Bliss from MRI arrived to discuss EMS Services in Grafton County.

Municipal Resources Inc. does Public Safety Consulting. Commissioner McLeod began by discussing the meeting that occurred in December regarding the Warren/Wentworth Ambulance service and the financial troubles they are facing. Mr. Bliss stated that this is a widespread problem across the country. Insurance payments do not come close to covering the actual costs of providing EMS services. Another issue is diminishing volunteerism, coupled with Grafton County being a rural county. Communities are strapped for resources. Commissioner McLeod stated that the problem is preventing communities from being able to do other initiatives because public safety has to come first. Commissioner Hedberg noted that she has spoken with the Plymouth Fire Chief and explained the issues that they are seeing. She stated there are different models. We need to figure out how to make it work.

D. Bliss stated that it is essential to leverage existing services. Most services in Grafton County are fire-based. He said that MRI could do a Needs Assessment and Mapping to identify conditions, current available resources, and if any areas have excess capacity or resources. This will help to identify gaps. Once the gaps are identified, you can start to discuss how to fill them. You can also look at historical trends. Commissioner Hedberg stated that we should also look at the care level needed from EMS providers.

Former Senator Bob Guida attended the meeting via Teams. Commissioner McLeod asked if he had any comments he would like to add. He discussed the situation in Warren and said it is apparent that there is no solution to the problem other than the taxpayer. He said the current system is not sustainable. EMS has been a county service in every rural state he has lived in.

Chad Miller, Littleton Fire Chief, stated that Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) funds received are for school, roads, fire, and rescue. In most states, these services are provided by counties. NH doesn't do it that way. The County receives PILT payments from the Forest Service for the Unincorporated Places. CA Libby noted that Grafton does use PILT funds to cover EMS services in Livermore, the county's only Unincorporated Place.

Chief Miller advised that the fire service isn't far behind EMS in this situation. If the county is going to do this work for EMS, it should also include fire services in its research. Many times, fire and EMS in communities are tied together.

Chief Miller noted that all EMS in Grafton County use the same EMR to enter data. Littleton subscribes to Continuum, which provides a tremendous amount of data. He would encourage the county to purchase this and get the data for MRI to analyze.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that starting with the mapping/needs assessment makes sense to determine our direction. MRI will put together a proposal and submit it for the Commissioners to review.

Commissioner McLeod asked Chief Miller if it was worthwhile to do this. He stated that it is important to understand that the EMS system in Grafton County is hanging on, and many challenges have a huge impact on people's health and personal needs. Having this conversation, working through the needs assessment, understanding the problems, and the fact that it's being talked about at the county leadership level can lead to a lot of good things.

6. Campus Security Committee Discussion: County Administrator Libby provided background on establishing the Campus Security Committee. She stated that at the committee's last meeting, they decided that the committee would be on pause until the Commissioners decided on the position that the committee requested, the Director of Emergency Preparedness and Campus Security. They planned to meet again in January 2025. CA Libby stated that the Commissioners had decided they did not support that position in the fiscal year 2025 budget. The Commissioners decided at that time that it should be considered in the fiscal year 2026 budget. Last week, the Chairman of the Security Committee decided to convene a meeting. The Commissioner

representative on that committee must be filled as former Commissioner Ahern filled it. CA Libby also wanted to see if the Board has any direction or purpose for the committee.

Commissioner Piper said it sounds like the committee lacks purpose and direction without that position being funded. Commissioner Hedberg said she had been forwarded the minutes and the CISA report. She would be interested in knowing more about the cost of the position and its responsibilities. She said that some thought was needed to address some of the concerns.

Commissioner Piper stated that we have a job description and determined the salary. Register Monahan made a comment at the beginning of this term that Commissioner Piper thought was really sound. She commented that Grafton County voted their wallets this term, as did the State of NH. This was Register Monahan's very astute observation. This position is a hard sell to the taxpayers; it asks to grow the government.

Commissioner McLeod stated that we have a new Sheriff, and it would be worth convening the committee so that Sheriff Myers can provide her input.

Asst CA Elsholz stated that the committee did good work, and it was a lot to discuss. It comes down to who's going to do this work. Commissioner McLeod asked ACA Elsholz if she thinks the committee should be brought back together. ACA Elsholz said yes but with direction. They should revisit things with the new sheriff.

Commissioner Hedberg said that the Commissioners should set action items for the committee. They should identify if there are smaller things we can do that are low dollar costs.

Register Monahan discussed historical safety initiatives. Out of that came some simple trainable actions that would protect the employees working here. After that, she was asked to leave the Joint Loss Committee for a conflict: "She saw too many things wrong here." She stated that the top recommendation from CISA was for a hire, but there were a lot of common sense and no-cost things, such as working together and developing plans to protect the public and employees. She stated that the real reason for the reboot of the Security Committee can't be discussed in public session but stemmed from an incident at the nursing home that the Sheriff was involved in. Register Monahan's complaint is why other adjoining departments were not notified of an existing security threat. That is a break in leadership. She is thrilled that there is a new sheriff. Register Monahan sees her role as prevention. She is all about prevention, right down to the position of her desk to the front steps. Prevention is what she's been working on for 14 years. She doesn't see that the committee went off the rails. She asked that the Commissioners let the committee meet another time.

Commissioner Hedberg said that no one said the committee went off the rails. Register Monahan stated that it was said there was no purpose or direction, so what's the point? Commissioner Piper took exception to this and said that was the premise of the discussion. CA introduced the conversation, and Commissioner Piper echoed that based on what she was hearing. No one said they are a directionless or pointless committee. Her point was that since the

hire was not approved, what direction and purpose could be given? Meaning the recommendation was a hire, and that hasn't happened; what else will be discussed, and what purpose and direction can be provided? Commissioner Piper stated that context is important.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that it makes sense to reconvene the committee to discuss low-cost issues and revisit them with the new Sheriff. She doesn't know the outcome, but they should have the committee meet. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner McLeod support that.

CA Libby will send the CISA report to Sheriff Myers, Commissioner Piper, and Commissioner McLeod for review. After they meet, the Commissioners would like an update from the committee.

Commissioners' Issues:

Commissioner Hedberg asked if there were any additional standing committees with Commissioner appointments. CA Libby stated that there were none besides the Courthouse Building Committee and the Campus Security Committee.

Commissioner Hedberg asked if an agenda item for future meetings could be to discuss Teams and the availability of meetings to the public.

Public Comment:

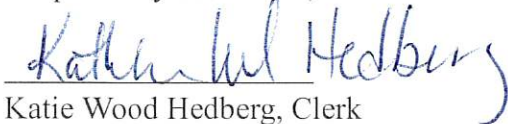
Nick De Mayo stated that the Fire Science program is a good idea and should be looked at throughout the County. It is good to get young people involved with on-the-job training to help communities with EMS.

Mr. De Mayo also stated that the Commissioners should practice financial conservatism and proceed slowly with Campus Security. He said that AI is developing quickly and that advancements in AI should be considered for campus security issues that could be addressed. He stated that the federal well is drying up, and taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for exorbitant projects.

Mr. De Mayo also stated that meetings should be recorded and sent to taxpayers.

11:39 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 February 3, 2025

HR Activity Report (01/07/2025-02/03/2025)

• ***New Hires***

Department	#	Position(s)
Corrections	2 (2 FT)	2 FT CO's
Maintenance	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Maintenance Asst.

Separations

Departments	#	
Nursing Home	1 (1 PD)	1 PD LNA
Maintenance	2 (2 FT)	1 FT Maintenance Asst. 1 FT Skilled Maintenance Asst.

Reasons:

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

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 PD LNA to FT, 1 FT LNA to FT LPN

Active Leave of Absences January 7 to present

Department	#	
Nursing Home – Nursing	15	(11 are intermittent, 10 for self, 5 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	9	(8 are intermittent, 8 for family, 1 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 intermittent, 1 self)
TOTAL	29	

Scheduled to orient 02/05

1 FT LNA

Scheduled to orient 2/19

1 FT LNA

1 FT Activity Aide

Current Jobs posted/advertised

LNA's/Unit Aides (14.15 FTE's vacant)

RN/LPN (8 FTE's vacant combined)

CO's (4 FTE's)

Cook – DOC

Cook – Nursing Home
Deputy
County Attorney's Office Legal Assistant
Housekeeper
Assistant County Attorney
Custodian
Skilled Maintenance Asst.
Maintenance Asst.
LNA Training Program

Other Business: LNA Class to begin 2/17 (provided we have it filled)

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: February 4, 2025

Census

Medicare: 3
NH Medicaid: 66 (9 Pending)
VT. Medicaid: 17 (0 Pending)
VA: 8
Hospice: 2
Private: 22
Total Census: 118

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: 3
Discharges: 2

Other Topics:

- 1) COVID Update
- 2) State Survey Inspection 1/29/25 – 1/31/25
- 3) Business Office Hours Increase
- 4) Congressionally Directed Spending Funding For The Landscape Project