

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
March 11, 2025

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, McLeod- via Teams, Hedberg, County Administrator Libby, and Assistant County Administrator Elsholz, Administrative Asst. Norcross – via Teams.

OTHERS: Farm Manager Libby, Maintenance Supt. Oakes, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Jeff Mealey – via Teams

Commissioner McLeod participated electronically, according to RSA 91-A: 2, with the reason being she was unable to attend the meeting in person. Electronic participation was at her request. It was noted that a roll call must take all votes.

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

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

Commissioner Piper stated that she wished the County Farm could sell eggs to their senior citizens as they have customarily done in the past. She noted that a member of the public brought up this issue the last time FM Libby was at a meeting. She stated that they are saving money by providing the eggs to the Department of Corrections but asked to discuss this further. FM Libby stated that the farm sells the eggs for \$4 a dozen, and the DoC is paying well over \$6 for a dozen eggs. He stated that the farm is not seeing the revenue, but the County is saving money. He explained that one of the reasons the DoC was put first on their priority list was because of former Commissioner Ahern and FarmDOC. The mission of FarmDOC was to provide fresh eggs, meat, and produce to the departments at the County Complex. If the Commissioners want him to sell the eggs rather than provide them to the DoC, then he will do that. The Commissioners further discussed the issue of the sale of eggs. FM Libby noted that they are talking about 12 dozen eggs a week. Employees buy them as well. If they put 12 dozen a week out for sale, people will still be turned away because none are left. Commissioner Piper stated that she wishes they could sell these eggs to the public as they always have and wonders about alternative sources of fresh eggs for the DoC so they are able to put these back out for sale for the citizens. She wonders what the cost differential is. Commissioner Hedberg stated that they are saving roughly \$24 a week at the DoC by providing them eggs, and it is not the cost savings that she had imagined. Commissioner Piper stated that she thinks more about the public than she thinks about money. The senior citizens are a vulnerable population and it is a nice resource to provide to their employees. Commissioner McLeod asked if FM Libby could discuss with the DoC Supt. about alternative ideas and meet with the Commissioners next week.

Maintenance Supt. Oakes - Courthouse Building Committee

CA Libby stated that the Commissioners received an email last week from Register Monahan in response to their request that she fill out a programming questionnaire for the proposed new Courthouse. CA Libby stated that she wanted to discuss that email and the next steps that the Commissioners would like to take. She noted that the direction from the Commissioners a few weeks ago was either Register Monahan fill out this questionnaire or her staff does, and CA Libby stated that having her staff fill this out after she has said no, puts them in a precarious situation and she does not feel that is something they should do. If the Commissioners would like to move forward with designing space for the Register of Deeds Office in the new facility, they can charge the Courthouse Building Committee with that task. CA Libby stated that they must think about what they want to do before they go through those steps. She noted that construction costs are roughly \$400-\$500 per sq ft., and they are looking at roughly 3,000 sq ft. more to add the Register of Deeds.

Commissioner Piper stated that she was most concerned about safety, given the numerous records of worry from the Register of Deeds. The Commissioners have a duty to do their due diligence to keep people safe. She asked if these concerns have been voiced with previous Register of Deeds. CA Libby stated that there has not been. Commissioner Piper stated that Rockingham County is in the courthouse, and she asked if other counties have done what Register Monahan originally suggested, which was to move their office to the Courthouse for safety reasons. CA Libby stated that she does not know the answer to that but noted that there is a combination across the state of Registers of Deeds being in courthouses or not, and she does not know the reasons why.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that their request of the Register of Deeds was not unreasonable, and every other department did it. Over the last few years, they have become more aware of safety deficiencies in their lives. She noted that over the next few years, there will be fewer and fewer people coming to the Register of Deeds Office because most things are done online now. They have many old records that need to be secured, but they should not have as many new paper records going forward.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that there is a Courthouse Building Committee meeting tomorrow. They could work together and put together a square footage proposal. Still, she feels they will be in a position, given everything happening at the state and federal level, that adding that much more money to an already expensive project will make it hard to get it approved. CA Libby stated that if there are security inadequacies that they can identify, they can address them for a lot less money than they would to create a new space in a new building. Commissioner Piper noted the previous issue with access to the public hallway that runs through the Register of Deeds hallway being closed off to Nursing Home staff, which caused a lot of consternation on the part of Nursing Home staff, and they have since allowed access to that hallway again. She stated she would not want to reintroduce safety measures, such as the example of blocking off that hallway, which they have already tried and then revoked. They can see if there are other safety issues beyond the ones they have changed. CA Libby noted that employees still tend to use the

basement access to the administration building because they are made to feel unwelcome using the hallway that runs through Deeds, but it is now at least accessible if someone needs to use it. Commissioner Piper wants to leave that access available to staff as it shows their support for employees.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she thinks they should do their due diligence and have the form filled out for the Register of Deeds Office by the Courthouse Building Committee. She added that they may find that not as much space is needed because there could be inefficiencies that could be addressed. She feels they should have a suitable fire suppression system and storage system for the documents the County has spent a lot of money on. She feels that they owe it to the people to determine if this is the best access for everyone, the best storage for the documents, and for employees to access the administration building. Commissioner McLeod stated that HR could also use the space. She feels they should do their due diligence and find out all the information to determine what is best for the County and its residents. CA Libby stated that in the email they received from Register Monahan, she said she was happy to speak directly to the architect, but that is not the process being used. Every other department head and elected official has filled out that questionnaire and worked with the Courthouse Building Committee.

Supt. Oakes asked where the position from the campus security stands. CA Libby stated that the position request will go through the FY26 budget process. Supt. Oakes stated that he thinks that position could assess the administration building to see where the threats are; if there are threats in this building, even after the Register of Deeds isn't in here, they should find out what those are. CA Libby stated that the Campus Security Committee did a survey to address safety issues and concerns from the departments within the Administration Building, and the findings from that survey showed that the only department with concerns around safety was the Register of Deeds. CA Libby stated that she is sure some areas can be improved, but overall, the departments in this building do not have the same concerns as the Register of Deeds.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 4th meeting. Commissioner Piper had the following edit:

Page 10, Paragraph 3: Commissioner Piper changed the sentence “ J. Slattery from Belknap Economic Development Council noted that their data on the 3rd quarter of 2024 shows that they worked with 36 businesses, had 137 1 1 sessions, and 100 counseling hours” to read “ J. Slattery from Belknap Economic Development Council noted that their data on the 3rd quarter of 2024 shows that they worked with 36 businesses, had 137 one on one sessions, and 100 counseling hours”

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes from the March 4th meeting as amended. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion. Commissioner McLeod called the roll. Commissioner Piper said “yes,” Commissioner Hedberg said

“yes,” and Commissioner McLeod said “yes.” With three (3) votes in favor and none in opposition, the motion passed.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers: 1118-1119; 1121-1124.
3. CDBG—Micro Drawdown—GRDC—\$5,039.00 –Commissioner McLeod gave CA Libby permission to use her signature stamp to sign the drawdown request.
4. Thank you letter to Sheriff Myers – PSU – CA Libby read a thank you letter from Plymouth State University thanking Sheriff Myers for speaking to their Police in Society Class.
5. MRI Announcement – CA Libby stated that MRI would like the County to send this announcement to all of the police chiefs, fire chiefs, select boards, and emergency management to let them know the initiative the County is taking on and letting them know MRI will be handling this project. Commissioner Hedberg noted that she received a call from a citizen of Wentworth who was concerned about the ambulance service and their request from the town, which is double what it was in the past. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she told this citizen the County is working on this initiative but they do not have any money to fund EMS service. The citizen is concerned that the funding request may not pass and she was looking for information on what the County was doing. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she discussed this MRI analysis proposal with the citizens.

Commissioner’s Issues:

1. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she attended the NHAC meeting on Friday and reported a lot of discussion on legislative and budget issues. The budget hearing at the state will be held tomorrow. Commissioner Piper stated that there is a 2% cap on county expenses for Medicaid recipients through long-term services. There will also be changes to ProShare, and there are concerns about insufficient funding for the increased aging population. She added that they also discussed the budget, and the US House passed a 22% reduction in Medicaid spending. They are looking for ways to make it more efficient. Gov. Ayotte instituted a Commission on Government Efficiency. The state wants counties to take a bigger role and extend their services. Commissioner Hedberg noted that the issue of Medicaid came up a few ways: the conversations around their seniors and what would happen with County Nursing Homes. Commissioner McLeod stated that it would challenge their rural healthcare providers.
2. Commissioner McLeod stated that she was contacted by a constituent about the WMUR access again and asked CA Libby for a status update. CA Libby reported that the County has an eight (8) page letter from the attorney working on this. She stated that it is not going to be an easy process. There is a lot of work that has to be done. She noted that part of the problem with WMUR is a disagreement with DISH Network and Hearst Communications, which owns WMUR. If DISH and Hearst cannot reach an agreement, WMUR will still not be offered to DISH. CA Libby stated that she would forward the memo to the Commissioners to discuss how to proceed. She will also work on figuring out how to get this information to the public to let them know people can submit letters of concern.

Public Comment

Nick De Mayo asked if someone could direct him to the press release regarding MRI. Mr. De Mayo also noted that he does not think Medicaid will be affected at the County level. The federal level is looking at waste and fraud; Grafton County does not have that. He stated that the Country is \$37 trillion in debt.

Agenda Items:

1. Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3, II (c)

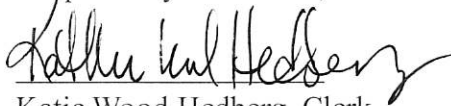
MOTION: * 10:13 AM Commissioner Piper moved to enter into a non-public session for the purpose of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (c). 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.

* 10:30 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.

10:30 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

March 11, 2025

Commissioners Report

1. Milking 60 – shipping 8700
2. Assessing tariffs and threats of tariffs on milk prices and supplies
3. Starting to plan early Spring work – trimming field edges etc

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Libby, Interim Farm Manager