

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
March 25, 2025

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

OTHERS: See attached sheet

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

Employee Council – Andre Sanders, Mariah Johnson

A. Sanders discussed the following list of requests from the Employee Council for FY 2026.

1. COLA – 3.5%
2. Meals are available for all shifts
3. Holidays are paid for the 24 hours of the holiday (0000 hours to 2359 hours)
4. Earn Time accrual rate increased to the same as department heads

The Commissioners thanked A. Sanders and M. Johnson for coming in and stated that they would discuss their requests and invite them back to a meeting at a later date.

Supt. Lethbridge arrived and requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 9:19 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.

* 10:58 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.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to uphold the recommendations of the two (2) unpaid suspensions and terminations that were recommended by Supt. Lethbridge. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion. The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioner Piper and Commissioner Hedberg were in favor. Commissioner McLeod was opposed. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition, the motion passes.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 18th meeting. Commissioner Piper stated that she had a grammatical edit.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes from the March 18th meeting as amended. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1128, 1130-1131.

3. DMV License for Use Agreement – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners had discussed and agreed to the lease renewal for the DMV office at the Courthouse, and the paperwork now needs to be executed.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the DMV License Use Agreement as written and to grant CA Libby the authority to enter into the agreement. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4. Crank the Kanc Competitive Bicycle Race Permit – CA Libby stated that the Mount Washington Valley Bicycling Club holds the Crank the Kanc event, and as the governing body of the Unincorporated Place of Livermore, a permit application must be signed and submitted by the County. Commissioner McLeod signed off on the permit.

5. NACO Counties for Housing Solutions Initiative – CA Libby reported that the New Hampshire County Consortium has been selected to participate. She stated that over the course of twelve (12) weeks, there are ten (10) virtual learning sessions that she and Assistant CA Elsholz will be attending. They also have three one-on-one sessions with Smart Growth America to learn about obtaining technical assistance for potentially utilizing county lands for housing projects.

Sheriff Myers & Sgt. Adams

Commissioner McLeod addressed the public comment policy. She stated that this about what the Commissioners are discussing. They have a procedure where they will allow for comments after their discussion with the Sheriff. She stated that, due to time constraints, they will allow two minutes per person for their comments. Commissioner McLeod added that comments must be

respectful, regardless of differences of opinion, and she asked that members of the public not disrupt the meeting. The comments are to be directed at the Commissioners.

Sheriff Myers stated that she signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on March 7th for a collaboration with ICE to have at least one officer trained on the procedures and how they might deal with a situation if they were to encounter someone who was undocumented. The MOA outlines the authority that a trained Deputy would have under ICE. Sheriff Myers noted that this can be found on ICE's website. Once they are trained, if they encounter someone who has committed a criminal act and is subsequently found to be undocumented, they will be able to handle that situation effectively. Sheriff Myers explained that they will not be out there racially profiling people or committing raids. They are a professional group of people, and if something like that were to happen, there are guidelines in place for dealing with complaints, similar to the internal affairs policy within their department. If there is a complaint, it will go through the Sheriff's Department and ICE as well. They have to be responsible and represent Grafton County. She encouraged everyone to read the MOA and explained that they had not yet received any training on this topic and were relying on the information provided in the MOA. Once they receive training, they will know more.

Commissioner McLeod asked if ICE were to come to Grafton County to carry out a raid, does the Sheriff's Department have any assurance that they will not be required to participate in that? Sheriff Myers stated that they will know more once they complete the training. She stated that having one person as a resource from their department is huge for helping local law enforcement agencies. Commissioner McLeod asked Sheriff Myers what makes her believe that her officers would not be pulled to other jurisdictions to assist with ICE. Sheriff Myers responded by stating that they are already involved with other task forces throughout the state. Sgt. Adams added that they already assist local and federal agencies and signing this agreement does not mean ICE will go to Grafton County for assistance.

Commissioner Piper stated that she is pleased to hear that it would never be Sheriff Myers' intention to profile, and if anything in the training violates how the County wants to treat its citizens, they will withdraw from the agreement. Commissioner Piper stated that the language of the MOA suggests that the County has the authority to withdraw if it chooses. Sheriff Myers added that, as written, they have the discretion to act when they see fit. Everyone will interpret it differently, but they are interpreting it from a law enforcement standpoint.

Commissioner Piper stated that Sheriff Myers is an elected official and accountable to her constituents. She is also accountable to her duties and the New Hampshire Constitution. Commissioner Piper asked if Sheriff Myers felt that if she did not sign up for this program, she would not be fulfilling her duties and giving her utmost to the residents of Grafton County. Sheriff Myers stated that she believes this is another tool for law enforcement and another collaboration with a federal agency. If they are not using the tools they are given, they are not doing justice to Grafton County. There are a lot of concerns regarding this but the Sheriff noted that the media typically portrays the horror cases. Sgt. Adams stated that if they were not to do this program, it does not mean they would let undocumented people go. They have to report

them to ICE, but instead of Grafton County being able to process them immediately, they would need to wait hours for someone to come from Boston, as Grafton County would not have the authority to handle it. Commissioner Piper noted that this is an extremely partisan time, and the issue is highly divisive. As an elected official, her duty is to do what is right for county government and the citizens she represents to the best of her knowledge. Commissioner Piper asked if they would be required by law to report an individual charged with a crime who is undocumented. Sgt. Adams does not know which statute specifically requires it, but as a law enforcement officer, he would be remiss not to do so. He further explained that it is no different than any other process they serve. If he were to look the other way and something terrible were to happen, then he is responsible for that.

Commissioner Hedberg clarified that it would be a violation, misdemeanor, or felony for these undocumented people to be stopped first. Sheriff Myers explained that if they conduct a motor vehicle stop, they must obtain everyone's information when issuing a citation. Their dispatch runs people through NCIC, and she is not sure if that data is synced with the system ICE uses. Commissioner Hedberg noted that they were concerned about due process and stated that they may have the best intentions. Sheriff Myers stated that they are a highly respectful group of people. They highly vet their employees, and she is going to hold her employees to those standards. They only take someone into custody if they have a warrant or if a crime is committed right in front of them. They are not racially profiling.

Commissioner Piper asked for clarification about the databases and inquired whether, if she were pulled over for an expired tag, her information would be processed through which database? Sgt. Adams explained that her information would go through NCIC, and if a detainer from ICE has been put into place, it would show up on NCIC. Sheriff Myers stated that the ICE incidents that are shown on the news are giving them a bad reputation. She stated that they may be able to help correct that reputation by participating in this program.

Commissioner McLeod stated that there are four (4) reasons why she thinks this is a bad idea. Taxpayers will be responsible for the cost of utilizing our manpower for this, given that we are already understaffed. Notably, the government will provide the training but they are forbidden to cover the other costs of the 287g agreement such as staffing. Grafton County will not be reimbursed for costs. She stated that this is not something she will support covering in the budget. It exposes Grafton County to liability. There are 4th Amendment violations and civil violations that this agreement exposes Grafton County to. Commissioner McLeod added that she feels the program harms public safety, as people do not report incidents when they know ICE is around. It divides law enforcement and immigrant groups and makes it harder to protect local towns. The deportation practices of the current administration are inhumane and they see that every night on the national news. People are being taken out of their homes, communities, or their jobs because ICE is going after them. ICE is going onto campuses and arresting students or people who may be giving these people a safe space. Commissioner McLeod stated that this is what is happening, and she obtains her information from national news sources, not Fox News. She does not think Grafton County should be lending its resources and she will fight against any of the County's resources going towards this program.

Sheriff Myers stated that the former Sheriff has said for the last two (2) years that they could not do the work statutorily required because there was not enough staff, and yesterday, the comment was made that they now have fewer staff. Sheriff Myers reported that they have not turned down any call or transport, and they have gone above and beyond to repair relationships with local agencies. She stated that they have half the staff and are working very hard.

Sheriff Myers stated that she can withdraw from the program at any time and noted that, as far as the budget goes, she worked very hard to ensure that her budget did not increase significantly, stating that it rose by only 1%, for the next six (6) months until they are fully staffed and Sgt. Adams does the training, this will not have any bearing on her budget.

Commissioner Hedberg noted that, as part of this, she does not believe the Sheriff's Department is planning to do anything wrong, but it is possible, and the federal government can claim that they did not authorize the County to do so. She stated that people say things happen or accuse someone of something that did not happen, and that still means that it would need to be defended in court. Commissioner Hedberg stated that if they could remove the partisan aspect, she wants to ensure that something like this protects the Sheriff's Department rather than increasing risk, and she feels that, despite having excellent law enforcement officers, it is putting them at risk. She has many of her own feelings and does not personally agree, but she is trying to ask questions about items in the MOA that she feels could put the County at risk. She would be concerned for personal liability as well as County liability.

Sheriff Myers explained that they do not transport someone if the paperwork isn't signed and checked off. They will vet the information on the person that ICE is sending them.

Commissioner McLeod stated that, despite the 287:g agreement, the County remains vulnerable to liability for money, damages, and the deputized officers are vulnerable to the same as well. There are several citations that the ACLU has given them on this. Sgt. Adams stated that people are assuming that the Sheriff's Department is not going to interact with this population if they do not sign this contract, but they will still be interacting with them and the liability will still be the same. Organizations such as the ACLU and others who support immigrants are much more likely to come after the County if they are apart of the 287:g program. She stated that they are putting the County at risk for this. It would be much less likely that programs like the ACLU would be successful in suing the County for a violation of constitutional rights if they are working with a group such as ICE.

Commissioner Piper stated that she heard a reference to Fox News and thinks they are all grown up enough to know that FOX and MSNBC are very overtly partisan, but know that ABC, CNN, NBC, and all media are corporate-owned. What you hear on ABC is corporate-owned and profit-driven. She does not take any news sources at face value. She stated that Commissioner Hedberg made a good attempt to remove the partisan elements from this. The Sheriff still feels that they are seeing her department through a particular lens, and she has spoken with a lot of constituents. This session is not a beating of another elected official by the Commissioners. Commissioner

Piper stated that she is authentically seeking factual information so she can represent her constituents. She noted that the overwhelming majority of constituents she heard from are members of the party to which she belongs, but she represents all residents of Lebanon, Hanover, and Enfield. She understands the frustration, and she is sorry for it. She appreciates Commissioner Hedberg's efforts to find information.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that she is struggling with the difference of what their responsibility would be with or without the ICE contract. The number of deportations has not necessarily increased; however, the manner in which they are conducted has changed. She does not want to see Grafton County get involved in something negatively when that is not their intention. She is not accusing anyone of racial profiling. She has concerns that the county's involvement with this reflects negatively on us as a County that wants people to come here. She is against this, but she fully believes she wants to hear what Sheriff Myers has to say.

Commissioner Piper noted that she thought Commissioner Hedberg's statement was fair. She asked how this contract benefits Grafton County residents. Sheriff Myers stated that it is another tool they can use. She stated that she has never had someone say they want law enforcement to have fewer tools to keep them safe. She further stated that she hopes the Commissioners will not use this against them and not approve her budget because of the participation of the program. They have only signed an MOA; they have not trained anyone, and no money has been lost. Sheriff Myers further stated that she understands that people see this as a negative thing for the County. She noted that there are also 85,000 people in the County. They are doing it from a law enforcement standpoint and not a party line. They are doing it because they are the County asset, when another law enforcement agency needs their help. They are going to do what is right and not violate any civil rights.

Commissioner McLeod stated that the County has to bear the financial cost and she is not in favor of that. She thinks that it exposes the County, the Sheriff and her officers to liability and litigation. This harms public safety; it is already raising questions about what the intent of the Grafton County Sheriff's Department is by participating. She does not feel this is the time to enter into this agreement with the current administration they have. She thinks this program is inhumane. She does not think the County should put their resources into this and feels it betrays the trust in law enforcement. She does not understand how one (1) person being trained is going to do any good because Sgt. Adams is not 24/7. She feels this will end up causing more people to end up being trained and more costly to Grafton County. She does not support it.

Public Comment:

Alix Olson, Canaan NH – A. Olson stated that she was in law enforcement for 30 years, 25 of which were spent as a detective. She stated that she respects Sheriff Myers and Sgt. Adams for the career they have chosen and knows how hard that can be. One (1) of her concerns is the potential loss of trust with people of Grafton County who they serve and protect because of the reputation ICE has. Loss of community support is huge for her and she is sure it is for them too.

The Sheriff's department has a good reputation and she feels that working with ICE will ruin that.

Amy Warchal, Enfield NH – A. Warchal stated that she will be the first person to say they want law enforcement to have less tools. She understands if someone is a criminal, running their information through a database. She stated that if they have someone who wants to racial profile, they now have the tools to do so. There will be a cost, financially, emotionally and mentally.

Julie Eckert, Enfield NH – J. Eckert stated that her greatest concern is that ICE has been aggressive and violating civil rights of people in this country. If someone is illegal, they still have rights. Grafton County needs to be careful because this agency is being too aggressive in their deportation processes, and she thinks that is a trap.

Kate Plumley Stewart – K. Plumley Stewart read a list of questions that she would like answered.

(1) What NH RSA and/or County Policy authorizes the Sheriff to sign a MOU with any agency? Typically, in NH no elected person may bind a municipality or county legally unless they are expressly granted this authority by law.

(2) Was the MOU reviewed by legal counsel?

(3) Why sign an agreement that is clearly poorly understood? Why not ask for training first?

(4) What is the law or state statute requiring reporting to other agencies?

(5) Who is liable financially for process errors and illegal detentions?

(6) What Grafton County data supports the need to sign on to 287(g)?

(7) How frequently do you detain and report any party to the federal government?

(8) How is it better to be turned over to the federal holding facility and how is that less time than waiting for the alleged party to be processed here? It seems you are looking to save County time rather than time for the individual.

(9) NH is considered the border zone. As much as the sheriff and sergeant may have been joking, we are by definition as a state fully located within 100 miles of the border.

(10) I see a lot of speculation on what might come out in the training, but a very clear lack of knowledge of what is in the contract.

(11) Why should Grafton County taxpayers pay for this?

(12) Why would you not establish an internal policy to standby to ensure the safety of Grafton County locals?

(13) Why would the Grafton County Sheriff's office sign on so early? I see no logic or data that tells me that Grafton County should be an early adopter.

I would encourage the commissioners to carefully consider whether the Sheriff's office budget covers potential expenses, including paying legal fees, insurance claims and deductibles. I do not want my tax dollars contributing to, cooperating with, and aiding ICE operations.

Enfield is not signing on to this tool and will be standing for safety only.

Dustin Vigneault, Haverhill, NH – D. Vigneault stated that this is a 30-year-old program and asked why now they are signing on to it as opposed to earlier.

Alice Kennedy, Enfield, NH – A. Kennedy stated that she feels they have not received a clear motivation for signing the contract, other than that it is a tool. They have not been presented with a specific need that it addresses, beyond being told that they will learn more after the training. She stated that signing up for this at this time sends a message of mistrust in their communities. Their police have worked to build trust in their communities and feel this undermines it.

Nick De Mayo, Sugar Hill – N. De Mayo thanked Sheriff Myers and Sgt. Adams for their straightforwardness and professionalism. He stated that he knows they will do a great job. All the questions being asked are moot because they have not had the training. The administration's policy is to keep them safe. He stated that they live in a transitory county which stretches to Coos County, to Cheshire, and Sullivan. He added that they do not know who is in this county. They are protecting citizens who are here legally, and people who are undocumented should not be in our country.

Bart Guetti – B. Guetti stated that he works for Dartmouth, and there is currently a lot of pressure on research funding, compounded by the additional pressure of being pulled over or questioned about whether they are in the country legally. He stated that it is not helping the productivity of staff and creativity that research requires to make contributions to society and science. He is opposed to this expansion of checking citizenship in this manner.

Sharon Racusin, Hanover, NH – S. Racusin stated that at this time in their lives, ICE is being used for not good purposes. It is not a substitute for the lack of a federal immigration policy, which is what they need. They are being asked to deputize themselves to be part of a law with malicious purposes. She stated that they need to remember that no one is illegal if they are undocumented. They need to protect people.

Gail Kinney, Canaan, NH – G. Kinney stated that she is a pastor with the United Church of Christ, and they have a strong presence within Grafton County. As a pastor, she has been monitoring the activity of ICE interacting with people coming into custody since 2011. She

appreciates the Sheriff saying she would like more tools. She stated that her question for this specific engagement is, " What tools are for what end and what purpose. What is going to be a positive for Grafton County?"

Sharon Parker, Enfield, NH – S. Parker stated that she feels our county is very safe, largely due to the efforts of the Sheriff and her staff, as well as the good relationships with the citizens. If they have undocumented people here, they are working hard.

Kathy Beckett, Lebanon, NH – K. Beckett stated that she wanted to address issues with liability. The website provides a wealth of information on the issues surrounding 287g, including the associated costs to municipalities and counties. She looked at a letter from the Wyoming ACLU, which was written to warn one of their Sheriff's Departments and indicated that volunteering for this program would have cost the office. She stated that there is an increased risk of costly litigation from racial profiling and civil rights violations.

Dena Romaro, Hanover, NH – D. Romaro stated that she strongly urged that the Sheriff's Department not enter into an agreement with an agency that has been behaving so badly.

Maylena Chaviano, Hanover, NH – M. Chaviano stated that she is a resident of Hanover and owns a small business in the area. She said that she was born in Cuba. They are US Citizens and residents here. She is glad that people are opposed to this program. Those who are documented and legal residents no longer feel safe. Being a part of this program only supports the mistreatment that ICE has been doing. She stated that they are all supporting in any way that they can for law enforcement to not have criminal activity, but not through this program.

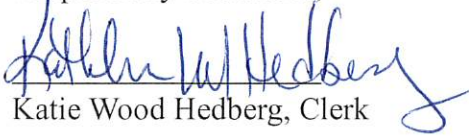
Martha Jane Rich, Enfield, NH – M. Jane Rich stated that she is opposed to entering into this contract for all the reasons they have heard. Should it proceed, she expects the Commissioners will continue to monitor the situation and receive reports from the Sheriff. She hopes the Sheriff will withdraw if any issues arise.

County Attorney Hornick stated that she wanted to listen to the conversation and determine how it might impact her office.

Carolyn Gordon stated that she appreciates the reputation for fairness that the Sheriff has, but is alarmed that she is about to lose the most important tool she has, which is fairness and public trust. She stated that she knows Sheriff Myers' intentions are good, but the trust will erode, and even if they drop out of the agreement, it will take years to regain that trust. She has immigrant friends who are living in terror. She stated that she does not want the police to be viewed as the enemy; she wants to see them as friends. She added that she does not want her daughter of color to wonder if she will be stopped. The message going out is that people should fear, and she encourages the Sheriff's Department to think about this.

12:56 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Katie Wood Hedberg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

Attendance Sheet

In Person:

Andre Sanders
Mariah Johnson
Sheriff Myers
Sgt. Adams
DoC Supt. Lethbridge
Captain Kendall
HR Director Clough
Alix Olson
Amy Warchal
Julie Eckert
Katherine Plumley Stewart
Dustin Vigneault

Via Teams:

Register Monahan	Gail Kinney
Nick De Mayo	Maylena Chaviano
Jeanette Hutchins	Jennifer Gilding
Dena Romero	Martha Tecca
Ann Garland	Chris Wellington
Deb Reynolds	Barbara Jones
Marta Ceroni	County Attorney Hornick
Karel Pluhar	Maggie Mogarty
Carolyn Gordon	Amelia Sreen
Lianne Moccia	
Martha Jane Rich	
Kathy B	
Alice Kennedy	
Joyce Weston	
Susan & Lewis Greenstein	
Bart Guetti	
Omer C. Ahern Jr.	
Susan Moore	
Sarah Thorne	
Carolyn Gordon	
Sharon Racusin	
Sharon Parker	
Dawna Pidgeon	