

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
April 3, 2025

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

OTHERS: Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff,

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

Nursing Home – Administrator Labore, Finance Director Jurentkuff

A. Revenue

NHA Labore stated that they are projecting a census of 120 residents. He stated that he intends on keeping a higher census and would like to be at 126-128 but budgeting the census at a lower rate helps them with the current unknowns at the federal level.

NHA Labore stated that he is not projecting any private pay increases. They want to keep it where it is right now, with the concerns around ProShare. He noted that he is projecting no changes to the Medicaid Rate as well and noted that this is a potential unknown.

There is an overall 4% increase in revenue

B. Expense

NH Admin

1. Employee Benefits – NHA Labore explained that he is requesting a \$6,000 increase in this line. He is proposing adding eight (8) hours a month to their Reiki program. The benefit has been received very well by staff. Commissioner Piper asked what the cost of the Reiki program is. NHA Labore stated that with the addition of 8 hours a month the cost is \$19,664. Commissioner McLeod stated that they are still really working on retention and retaining trained and experienced staff. This is a good program to offer.

Bed Tax – The increase in this line is due to projected revenue increase.

Dietary

1. Education & Conference – NHA stated that the Nursing Home received funding in the current budget for their baker to take additional baking classes through King Arthur. He reported that it

has gone very well and the baker has learned a lot. It has been well received by staff and residents and therefore he has included \$250 for her to take an additional course next fiscal year.

2. Food Supplies – This line includes all food purchases for residents and staff. NHA Labore stated that this \$115,000 increase is due to the increase in census as well as inflation and trying to anticipate the impact of the tariffs.

3. Computer Hardware & Maintenance – NHA Labore stated that he is requesting a \$4,000 increase as he has ideas to enhance efficiency in the Nursing Home and wanted to budget money for those. He will work with the new IT Director on the best ways to implement these ideas.

Nursing

1. Contract Nursing Services – NHA Labore reported that he has decreased this line another \$750,000. Any contracted nursing going forward he believes will be on the night shift as they are having a hard time filling those shifts.

2. Education and Conference – NHA Labore is proposing a phlebotomy course for nursing staff as well as CPI training (Crisis Prevention Institute). He stated that this is crisis training for staff on how to respond to events, and defensive training. He explained that in June of last year, they had an LNA taken hostage by a male resident on the dementia unit and have since decided to look into de-escalation training for staff. This is a three (3) day training for a staff member to become a trainer and then come back and train staff. The phlebotomy course is an opportunity to improve the number of staff who feel comfortable drawing blood. They have 4-5 nurses who feel comfortable and the rest do not. He explained that this goes along with lab contract issues with Cottage Hospital. With staffing issues at the hospital, they are not able to come once a week to the Nursing Home to draw labs as their contract requires, and this training would allow more staff on hand to draw blood.

4. LPN Tuition Program— NHA Labore stated that there are two (2) LNAs in the program. He is anticipating that they will have more staff interested in this upcoming year and he has increased this line for that potential increase.

Restorative Nursing

1. Coordinator – The increase in this line is due to the hiring of a new coordinator at the high end of the wage chart.

2. Restorative Aids – FM Jurentkuff explained that 2-3 years ago they dropped the FTE count as they were unable to staff it. They are now able to staff it and have brought back the FTEs that have been previously approved.

Therapeutic Recreation

NHA Labore stated that he is requesting funding for one (1) new Activity Aid position and has budgeted that at a Step 3, or \$40,956.00. He explained that the thought behind this request, with the census continuing to grow, it will allow the Activities Director to be more of a hands-on director and help the team be more engaged. As they have a higher census, not all residents like to participate in group activities and this would allow a 2-track program. Those who don't like to participate in group activities would be able to have one-on-one activities.

Pharmacy & Physician

This increase based on increased census.

Contract Services

Contracted Dietician – NHA Labore explained that it took some time to fill this position and when they found someone, they had to go above what they had budgeted and this year the budget reflects the costs for that person.

Emergency Preparedness Consultant – NHA Labore stated that he sees a real benefit in this position. He is proposing 25-hours a week to help with the planning design and training for the Nursing Home and looking at the overall security of the building. A lot of what was proposed in the campus wide position is what he would be using in the Nursing Home. He stated that if the campus wide position is implemented, this contracted service could be removed.

Capital Reserve

Beam Guardrail – NHA Labore stated that, after the recent motor vehicle accident at the Nursing Home, they are requesting to install a guard rail in front of 2003 building.

Expansion of Secure Care Wander Guard System – NHA Labore stated that he would like to expand this system to the Maple and Profile units. He explained that there is an increase in dementia residents and not all of them can be on the dementia unit.

Ice Cube Maker – NHA Labore stated that they are looking to replace the aged ice cube maker in the Nursing Home kitchen which is malfunctioning on a regular basis. The current machine is 20+ years old.

25/EA Resident Beds – This is the final year of a phased replacement for beds. As they increase the census, they will need these beds.

20/EA Air Pressure Mattresses with Pump – This is the continuation of replacement mattresses.

5/EA reach in Dual Temp Cabinet Refrigerator – NHA Labore stated that they are looking to replace unit refrigerators and the one in the activities room due to failing equipment.

Field Conversion Kit for Weight Scale – NHA Labore stated that they are requesting the addition of a digital weight scale to two (2) of their resident bathing tub chair lifts.

Automation of Entry/Exit Doors to Resident Unit – NHA Labore explained that the entry and exit doors are too heavy for residents to open on their own. This project will allow them to enter/exit the unit as they wish without having to wait for staff to assist them. He noted that the residents who are covered by the Wander Guard system will not be able to leave the facility.

IT Department – CA Libby

CA Libby stated that they have offered a position to a gentleman and are waiting for the background check to come back from the Sheriff's Department. She anticipates that he will be starting mid-May.

A. Revenue

USAC Subsidy – CA Libby explained that this is a rural healthcare subsidy. The County has two (2) contracts with SNS. One (1) is for the Nursing Home and some administrative services. The County is able to be reimbursed 65% of that contract. They contract through a 3rd party agency, NETC, to handle that subsidy. NETC receives 15% and the County receives 50%. This has been included in the regular budget but last year the subsidy was denied. They did receive some but ended up being over expended. She decided this year to break that out and put it into a revenue line and the total for that is \$143,161.00.

B. Expense

1. CA Libby explained that the FY2025 budget has a full-time IT Director position budgeted for six (6) months. This upcoming FY26 budget has the full year at actual salary offered for this position and that is the increase in that line.

2. Contracted Services – CA Libby stated that this increase is based on the two (2) contracts with SNS totaling \$373,168. She explained that there are two (2) projects that they have identified that are labor only through SNS; Barracuda Migration and an 802.1X Security Project. She stated that this is a less expensive alternative to what was recommended. She noted these projects were in the budget requests last year but were removed when the budget needed to be cut.

3. New Equipment – CA Libby reviewed the various pieces of new equipment for all of the departments.

4. Software Maintenance & Renewal – CA Libby stated that the current contract with SNS includes some of the Microsoft licensing. She stated that they have pulled those out of that contract because by being able to manage those, the County has been able to receive better

pricing. They now fall under the Software Maintenance and Renewal line and this is part of this increase in this line.

CA Libby stated that there is a \$242,602.00 increase in the IT budget. There is a total of just under \$100,000 net increase once the subsidy revenue is accounted for.

Campus Security

CA Libby stated that this is a new department that was proposed from the Campus Security Committee. She stated that this is primarily salary and benefits but she has included some money for training, and equipment as well. If this is approved, she felt this position would need some funding for training and equipment. CA Libby stated that she has included this budget for the Commissioners to review.

Human Services

CA Libby stated that she has budgeted for the 3% increase in the proposed cap for FY26. She further discussed the cap with the Commissioners and answered questions. CA Libby gave the Commissioners a simple definition of the County Cap and noted that she would make sure the Delegation gets a copy of it when they present the budget. Commissioner McLeod read the following definition:

County taxpayers are responsible for 100% of the nonfederal share of Medicaid spending for certain long-term care supports and services in the State of NH. This includes nursing homes, assisted living facilities (both public and private) and community-based services. In New Hampshire the Federal Government contributes 50% of the cost of these Medicaid programs – or the Federal Share. State law does cap the amount of funds that counties are responsible for. The current cap is set at \$131,849,659; all. Non-federal costs beyond that are the responsibility of the state. The cap payments are made on a usage of those qualified for nursing home level of care and divided into 12 payments for each county. The county governments rely on property taxes, collected from the cities and towns in each county, to make these payments.

Social Services

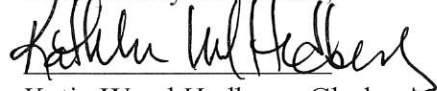
Commissioner Piper stated that in her experience, she has seen that they had a social service agency, who did not submit an application. That agency was out \$20,000 that it had historically received and that agency survived, despite its lack of proper management. It has been funded ever since. It made her wonder how dependent these agencies are on County funding. She stated that the social services funding competes with employee morale and interest because this is not a statutory requirement. She is pleased with the work they have done with the social services agencies and making funding targeted for long-term services and supports and the DoC.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she supports these agencies as it is one way to support older residents and their older veterans.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that they need to keep an eye on how to keep their most vulnerable at home. She noted that she read these requests with a keen eye on what fit the County's mission and she only had a question on the application from Responders Together. She stated that is a good organization for first responders but questioned how it fit into their statutory goal of reducing recidivism and keeping the elders in their home. Commissioner McLeod stated that she wondered if it was more related to Opioid funds. The Commissioners discussed a couple of agencies who may be able to be funded through Opioid Abatement Funds. The Commissioners discussed trying to come up with a standard funding level and agreed to look further into these agencies.

12:07 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katie Wood Hedberg", written over a horizontal line.

Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk