

# GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

March 24, 2025

PRESENT: Reps. Baldwin, Bjelobrk, Bolton, Franz, Oppel, Sellers, Spahr, Stringham – via Teams, Sykes. Commissioner Piper, Commissioner McLeod, Commissioner Hedberg, County Administrator Libby, Assistant County Administrator Elsholz, and Administrative Assistant Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Treasurer Cryans, Sheriff Myers, Sgt. Ben Adams, Register Monahan – via Teams, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Glenn Libby – via Teams, Eddie Qi – via Teams.

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

Rep. Sykes stated that the first item of business to be completed was the approval of the minutes from the January 27th meeting.

**MOTION:** Rep. Bolton moved to approve the minutes from the January 27<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee meeting. Rep. Baldwin seconded the motion. Reps. Baldwin, Bjelobrk, Bolton, Franz, Spahr and Sykes were in favor. Rep. Sellers and Oppel abstained. With the vote being six (6) in favor, two (2) abstentions, and none opposed, the motion passes.

Rep. Stringham arrived via Teams, and it was noted that votes must now be taken by roll call.

## Treasurer Cryans arrived and gave the following Treasurer's Report:

TO: GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  
FROM: MICHAEL CRYANS, TREASURER  
SUBJECT: TREASURER'S REPORT  
DATE: MARCH 24, 2025



### CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 02/28/25)

#### **Grafton County General Fund**

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.15%)	\$	313,781.75 (Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank)
Investment Account Money Market (4.46%)	\$	373,920.39 (NH Public Deposit Invest. Pool)
Investment Account (ICS @ 4.40%)	\$	2,557,112.93 (Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account ICS @ 4.33%	\$	1,686,633.20 (Bank of NH)
Investment Account (ICS @ 4.41%)	\$	2,578,934.89 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Account (ICS 4.33%)	\$	1,006,186.46 (Franklin Savings Bank)
Investment Acct. (26 Week CDARS 4.50%)	\$	2,501,000.00 (Bar Harbor Bank & Trust)

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Investment Acct. (13 Week CDARS 4.50%) \$ 2,513,300.70 (Passumpsic Savings Bank)

**Grafton County Reserved/Dedicated Accounts**

Deeds Surcharge ICS (4.17%)	\$	304,414.97 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve ICS (4.17%)	\$	85,149.90 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (4.75%)	\$	715,194.88 (Northway Bank)
Northway Money Market	\$	58.75 (Northway Bank)
American Rescue Plan Funds (4.33%)	\$	1,926,989.68 (Bank of NH)
NTIA Letter of Credit ICS (4.33%)	\$	4,549,549.74 (Bank of NH)

**RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE**

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/24-02/28/25) is \$221,820.35.

Although investment rates are favorable, we had less money to invest this year, as we had to pay off the \$4,000,000 tax anticipation note. Therefore, we will not reach our budgeted revenue amount of \$450,000 for FY2025.

Rep. Oppel asked how the County chooses the banks to invest funds with. Treasurer Cryans explained that there is a bidding process through a Request for Proposal (RFP). Historically, the County tries to invest funds throughout banks that are located in Grafton County.

**MOTION:** Rep. Baldwin moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Rep. Sellers seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Bjelobrk "yes", 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 motion passes.

**Commissioner McLeod gave the following Commissioner's Report:**

Commissioners' Report  
March 24, 2025

**Staffing Update:**

- Since our last report, the county has hired seventeen (17) new employees and had ten (10) separations from employment. Eleven (11) new hires in that period were at the nursing home. We currently have 418 total employees. We currently have 14.65 vacant FTEs for LNAs, 8 FTEs vacant for RN/LPN positions, and four (4) vacant correctional officer positions. We have significantly reduced our nursing home and Department of Corrections vacancies.



- We have started a new LNA class. The class has six (6) students. It is anticipated that this class will be completed in late May. When licensed, these students will fill vacancies on the night shift, further reducing vacancies.
- Contracted Staff: We currently have five (5) LPNs, down from eight (8) in January, and four (5) LNAs, which is up by one since January. Most contract staff work on the evening and night shifts, which are the most challenging positions for the county to fill. Due to our staffing shortages, in fiscal year 2023, we spent \$4,280,891.32 on contract staff. During the first eight (8) months of fiscal year 2025, we have spent \$1,468,614. Our efforts to recruit and retain staff have been successful. We are seeing this in the reduction in costs for contract staff.

#### **Nursing Home:**

- The nursing home's census is currently 120.

#### **Department of Corrections:**

- The current in-house census is 72, with another 34 out of the facility. We have 20 in pretrial services, 6 in other facilities, 4 NHSP, 2 serving weekend sentences, and 2 on Electronic Monitoring.

#### **Information Technology:**

- The search for an Information Technology Director continues. We anticipate having a new hire by mid-May.

#### **Fiscal Year 2026 Budget:**

- The Commissioners have begun budget meetings with department heads.
- The Commissioners will work through April to develop the Commissioners' Recommended budget, which should be ready by early to mid-May.
- A Public Hearing will be held once the Proposed budget is distributed.
- The Executive Committee will begin working on the FY 26 budget in early June.

#### **FCC Market Modification:**

- The Commissioners have been contacted by some constituents who do not have access to WMUR on Dish Network. This is believed to be because much of Grafton County is considered in the Burlington, VT/Plattsburg, NY viewing market as opposed to the Manchester/Boston market. The Commissioners have retained counsel to look into the process of filing for a market modification. County governments are one of only a few entities that can file a petition. We did set aside ARPA funds for this project. We will keep you updated on the progress.

#### **Broadband Update:**

- On March 14<sup>th</sup>, the County received our Special Use Permit from the US Forest Service, clearing the way for the project to move forward in the White Mountain National Forest

areas. We have been waiting for this permit for a long time. Once the permit is received, we can submit our finalized application for our NEPA review. On March 19th, we received our NEPA approval and are now cleared to begin construction on the entire project.

- Now that this is completed, eX2, our contractor, will be able to submit all pole license applications and can work with utility and telecom companies to complete make-ready work on poles to begin running fiber for our project! We await final approval from the NTIA grants office on a change from underground to ariel on a one-mile stretch of road in Lyman. Once that approval is received, eX2's vendor, Auction, will start the construction there, which should happen soon.
- We continue to work with Hub 66 to develop a contract. They will be the Internet Service Provider that the County partners with to bring fiber to homes from the Middle Mile. Hub 66 is currently working in many parts of the County, and we are excited to work with them to deliver high-speed, reliable internet to our constituents.

#### **Courthouse Update:**

- Lavallee Brensigner Architects (LBA) have essentially completed the programming phase of the project. The completion of this phase has been pending additional information regarding the Registry of Deeds. The Commissioners have decided they would like the Registry of Deeds to be located in the new courthouse. They have heard on multiple occasions from the current Register of Deeds that the space they occupy in the Administration building has challenges. These challenges include safety concerns for the Registry staff, inadequate storage for historical documents from the perspective of fire suppression, and environmental controls. The other issue that the Commissioners are concerned with is accessibility to the Registry. They have concluded that space within the new facility would be in the best interest of the public who uses that office and the staff. This directive from the board was recently made. The Courthouse Building Committee has been working with LBA to determine space needs as the current Register has declined to complete a programming questionnaire as requested. Register of Deeds Monahan has expressed that she does not want the Registry office moved into the new building. With the addition of space for the Registry, the building is 63,713 square feet. It is roughly 15,000 square feet larger than the existing courthouse.
- LBA has begun the Conceptual Design phase, and on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>, they presented three options for the building layout site. The Courthouse Building Committee and Commissioners have agreed on an option for that.
- Another issue being reviewed currently is a direct connection to the Jail. For that to happen with the new building, it must be an underground tunnel. Discussions are underway with the Sheriff to determine the need for a direct connection.
- The final report from LBA with the conceptual design and estimated full costs for construction is due mid-June.
- After receiving the final report, the Commissioners will thoroughly review everything and decide on the next steps. If they want to proceed with design and construction, they will come to the Delegation for a proposed Bond Vote to finance the project. This is expected to occur in the late summer/early fall of this year.

### American Rescue Plan Act of 2021:

- Grafton County received \$17.4M in ARPA funding. Ninety-two (92) ARPA projects were approved by the Commissioners and Executive Committee. Most of the projects have been completed. All funds were required to be obligated by December 31, 2024. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) defines an obligation as an order for property or services or the creation of contracts, subawards, or other similar transactions that require payment. ARPA regulations require local governments to return unobligated grant funding to the U.S. Department of Treasury beyond the December 2024 end-of-year deadline.
- All of our ARPA funding has been obligated. Eleven (11) open projects have obligations totaling \$1,381,407.33 that will be paid out over the next two (2) years. The deadline to expend ARPA funds is December 31, 2026.
- ARPA spending was allowed in four (4) categories:
  - Public Health
  - Premium Pay
  - Infrastructure (specifically Water, Sewer, & Broadband)
  - Revenue Loss (Local governments can claim up to \$10 million of their ARPA SLFRF grant allocations for revenue replacement)
- Below is the breakdown of Grafton County's obligations:

<b>Response to Public Health Emergency</b>	<b>Premium Pay for Essential Employees</b>	<b>Water, Sewer or Broadband Infrastructure</b>	<b>Revenue Replacement</b>	<b>Total Allocation</b>
\$ 2,565,414.07	\$ 1,158,536.24	\$ 4,058,854.89	\$ 9,676,496.80	\$ 17,459,302.00

Rep. Spahr asked where the County was with regard to the hiring of a new IT Director. He asked if there were any specific criteria or areas of concern they were looking at. Commissioner McLeod stated that the issues they are looking at cannot easily be resolved or are very expensive through their current vendor, SNS. She explained that the County's administrative staff is not qualified to handle many of these IT issues, and having someone on staff who is knowledgeable in that area is what they are looking for. CA Libby added that the County had its own internal IT Department up until 2021, and they made the change to go to a 100% managed service provider. That has not been the best experience, and they are looking to go with a hybrid model where the County has its own IT Director on staff. She stated that she has been the person in charge of making decisions and budgeting for IT, and she is not an expert by any means. She feels it is important to have an expert, who is a County employee, to help them make those decisions and guide the County towards what the best IT platform is. Rep. Oppel asked who helped conduct the search for this position and advise the County on the applicants. CA Libby explained that IT Directors from Merrimack and Rockingham County went through the applications that were received, and there were a total of five (5) people who were on the interview panel. She stated that she hopes to have a new IT Director on Board in April.

Rep. Bjelobrk asked if the County has calculated the costs of moving the Register of Deeds to the courthouse. Commissioner McLeod stated that the Courthouse Committee Building has



obtained some estimates on the costs, but the architects have not yet provided those estimates. Commissioner Piper noted that they have had very thorough discussions about this for a long time. She and Commissioner McLeod were in favor of sticking with the original plan, which was to relocate the Register of Deeds to the new courthouse. She stated that this is her 8<sup>th</sup> year and safety has been an enormous concern on the part of the Register of Deeds. The County has used Band aids to address the security issues that the Register of Deeds has mentioned over the years. Commissioner Piper discussed a few of the concerns shared by the Register of Deeds with the Executive Committee.

Rep. Sellers inquired about the additional cost of creating a new IT Director position. CA Libby stated that the IT Director position was approved for a January 1<sup>st</sup> date in this current budget. Next year will show the additional 6-month costs for the entire year.

Rep. Sellers asked what would happen to the current space that the Register of Deeds occupies and what thoughts have been given to the Registry Deeds. Commissioner McLeod stated that they would look to relocate the HR Department to that area, which would be more accessible to employees, especially those coming from the Nursing Home. The security issues they discussed are targeted only towards the Deeds office. Commissioner Hedberg added that there were also environmental concerns with records storage in this current space, and accessibility for the public would be much better in the courthouse as well.

**MOTION:** Rep. Oppel moved to approve the Commissioners' Report. Rep. Bjelobrk seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Bjelobrk "yes", 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 motion passes.

#### **CA Libby gave the following County Administrators Report:**

County Administrator's Report  
March 24, 2025

#### **Financial Reports**

- ❖ Cash Management Report – This report shows where the county's funds are invested. This includes operational monies and reserve accounts. County taxes are due on December 17<sup>th</sup> every year. Since we have just collected taxes, our cash position is good. We have money tied up securing our Letter of Credit for the Broadband grant, which impacts our cash flow. We will continue to monitor our cash position.
- ❖ The Monthly Variance Report compares the budget to actuals on an equal monthly basis and looks at the positive (black) or negative (red) variances. These reports represent six (6) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2025 Budget	FY 2025 YTD Actuals
NH Medicaid	69	66
VT Medicaid	20	17
Medicare	3	3
Private Pay	17	23
Veterans	7	9
Total	116	118

- In fiscal year 2025, we budgeted for a census of 116 broken down by the payor sources as listed above. The current census at the nursing home is 120. We are now averaging two (2) residents above our projected census. We are still showing a negative revenue variance because we have been below our budgeted projections for the first four (4) months of the year. If we can maintain the census at the current level, revenue numbers will continue to improve. In addition, our NH Medicaid rate increased by \$14.24, which we did not budget for; we budgeted for a slight decrease, which will also help offset the lower census.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly. ProShare is an unknown amount. We will learn what our Proshare payment will be in May. After doing some preliminary estimates, I do not believe we will receive the \$2,650,000 that was included in our budget. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter bed tax payment also indicates that bed tax revenue will come in below projections. We will continue to monitor. We will not receive the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter payment until mid-May. Both of these are large sources of Medicaid revenue for the nursing home and not receiving the amount we have budgeted creates shortfalls in our revenues for the year.
- The Department of Corrections currently shows a slight unfavorable variance of due to the timing of grant payments from the State of NH.
- The farm shows a favorable variance of \$101,936! Several things have contributed to the favorable position. We completed a logging operation this summer/fall that produced \$42,832.74. In addition, our sale of livestock revenues are exceeding estimates, and we were able to sell several acres of standing corn at the end of the season.



- The Sheriff's Department shows a favorable variance of \$29,531.55.
- County Attorney/Victim Witness. These are both grants. We receive \$30,000 in grant funding from the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA), which is used to offset the salary of the prosecutor who does this work in the County Attorney's office. We also received funding from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). This grant reimburses costs associated with our Victim Witness program. It is a direct reimbursement for expenditures. Reimbursements are requested quarterly.
- CA – Circuit Court – The County Attorney's office provides prosecutors who provide Circuit Court services for police departments throughout the county. We have two (2) contracts that reimburse the expenses for these two (2) positions. This is showing an unfavorable position due to several payments being overdue.
- Alternative Sentencing is currently showing an unfavorable variance of \$6,769.74. 5,990.04. That is due to the timing of revenue collection.
- The Register of Deeds revenue shows a favorable variance of \$69,392.62.
- Interest income shows an unfavorable variance of \$78,379.65. This is due to less cash being invested in the fall than anticipated. Tax revenues have been invested, and we will see a rebound in this revenue. Interest rates have decreased somewhat, and we will likely not realize all the projected income. Projections as of now indicate total interest collections for the year will likely be between \$350,000 - \$375,000.

Overall revenues appear to be on target for the budget. The concern is the unknown with Proshare and Bed Tax payments for the nursing home. We will continue to monitor.

#### Expenses

- Through eight (8) months, the variance report shows several departments with negative variances. This has been the trend this fiscal year. Each month continues to show improvement, and most of the negative variances result from the timing of expenditures. I don't see any trends that are concerning at this point. The bonded debt line shows a negative variance because the only bond payment for the fiscal year was made on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Overall, expenditures are trending lower than budget in most areas. We will continue to monitor that as well.

- ❖ Pro-rated Report: This report looks at the percentage of the year completed and then pro-rates revenues and expenses based on known variations in revenues and expenditures.



- 66.67% of the fiscal year completed. On the pro-rated report, I factor in the revenue and expenses that are either over or under at this point in the fiscal year. Based on the February reports, we are at 66.48%, below revenue by \$97,235.94, contingent upon receiving our budgeted amounts for Proshare and bed tax. We are at 65.01% or under-expended by \$933,525.
- ❖ Over-Expenditure Report—This report shows any over-expended line item at month-end. Per the by-laws of the Grafton County Delegation, the Commissioners have the authority to transfer money within departments to cover department over-expenditures. In addition, they have permission to transfer up to \$5,000 between departments. Anything above \$5,000 requires approval of the Executive Committee.
  - We do have several over-expended accounts. Most will have ample funds within their department budgets to cover the overages. The Tax Anticipation Note Interest and Outside Counsel lines will require transfers greater than \$5,000 into them. I will make that request at a later meeting date.

Rep. Sykes asked if the County is tracking federal funds and if there are any concerns regarding those funds. CA Libby stated that Treasurer Cryans pointed out the cuts to Medicaid that would have a significant impact on the County and the Nursing Home. The county receives several federal grants. She noted that they continue to draw down on the Broadband grant and have not been told yet that they cannot access money. The VOCA grant is only a 6-month grant period right now due to issues at the state and federal level. There are going to be impacts, but they are waiting for them to play out.

Rep. Sellers asked if the administration is going to be cutting both Medicaid and Medicare. CA Libby stated that the proposed \$880 billion in cuts is for Medicaid, which are the majority of the residents in the Nursing Home. Rep. Bjelobrk asked about Vermont Medicaid residents. CA Libby stated that the County has a much better reimbursement rate through Vermont Medicaid. She is not sure how the impacts will affect those rates as well. Rep. Sykes stated that under the terms in which Medicaid expansion took place in New Hampshire, the bill that passed suggested that if the federal government were to discontinue the payments, the state, in turn, would discontinue Medicaid expansion, and that is very worrisome for Grafton County. CA Libby stated that HB547 would help Grafton County. She stated that this bill is a credit that counties are looking for a payment they did not receive correctly as part of the FMAP program.

Commissioner Piper stated that an issue she has heard statewide, that Nursing Home Administrators are saying is that if they did not have Medicaid, the issue would be if the counties could even continue that support, and if it would be feasible for taxpayers.

**MOTION:** Rep. Franz moved to approve the County Administrator's Report. Rep. Oppel seconded the motion. Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Baldwin "yes", Rep. Bjelobrk "yes", Bolton "yes", Rep. Franz "yes", Rep. Oppel "yes", Rep. Sellers "yes", Rep. Spahr "yes", Rep. Sykes "yes". With the vote being eight (8) in favor and none in opposition the motion passes.

## **New Business**

Rep. Sykes stated that generally, County Government is sleepy but has not been about this particular issue. He felt it was reasonable to have a discussion regarding the ICE contract that was recently signed by Sheriff Myers. Rep. Sellers asked for an explanation of the contract and its requirements. Sheriff Myers explained that the 287 (g) program was started in 1996 by Bill Clinton, and it has gained traction with the newly elected President. Grafton County joined this program, which deals with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). She stated that this initiative is bringing law enforcement agencies together to ensure everyone is properly trained on how to handle undocumented immigrants in the event that such a situation arises. She explained that this is not about conducting raids or profiling. This would be the case if they come across someone who has committed a law violation in their regular day-to-day dealings. Sheriff Myers explained that the closest field office is in Boston, MA. Signing this contract and undergoing this training gives their department the necessary resources and training to address these issues proactively.

Sgt. Adams stated that all the information they have is from public documents that can be found on the ICE website. The training is 40 hours, online-based. He explained that regardless of whether they have received this training or not, they will be responding to this member of the community, but they will now be equipped with the knowledge to deal with these situations. This is not a new law; this has been in place. This training allows them to expedite the process and expand their ability to assist other agencies.

Rep. Sellers inquired about the cost and the number of required training hours. Sheriff Myers stated that not all deputies will be required to complete this training. They are hoping to have one (1) complete the training right now, and if that goes well, they may look at a second. She then stated that this year they are required to have 24 hours of in-service training, and each year, those numbers will continue to increase; this training would count towards those hours. Sheriff Myers explained that Sgt. Adams will be doing this training, and since it is online, they can step away from the training to deal with any issues that may arise. Sgt. Adams added that the Governor intends to push funds for border enforcement. If they are called for assistance with a transport from another agency, he would assume that the cost of their time would be covered, which would fall under the detail rate that generates revenue for the County.

Rep. Oppel stated that there are many strong feelings on this on both sides. For an issue like this, given the climate in this country, he would urge the Sheriff's Department to get in front of this and explain why they are doing this. They are much better off dealing with informed people who can make rational decisions. He fears that tomorrow at the Commissioners' meeting, they will be confronted with people who have preconceived notions of this program. Having this information ahead of time may help with some of that. Rep. Bolton asked what other counties are doing this. Sheriff Myers stated that Belknap County has signed the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), and several individual agencies have also signed it.

Rep. Sykes stated that one of the motivators was because of training, yet at the same time, there will be an increase in training for all staff. Sheriff Myers stated that they want someone who is



trained in this area, and if anything does happen, people tend to look to County Government. She added that the State Police and towns without 24/7 departments have been referring calls to the Sheriff's Department, and she believes this is crucial for other agencies to have someone to represent them in such situations. Rep. Sykes noted three (3) areas of concern: rational, operational implications, and the budgetary impacts. He asked what the current staffing model looks like. Sheriff Myers stated that they currently have four (4) Deputy positions that are vacant, and they are actively trying to fill those. Rep. Sykes stated that he wonders why the Sheriff's Department is taking on more responsibilities when they are short-staffed. Sheriff Myers stated that this is not an additional task; if they are not trained and encounter an undocumented person, it will take more time for the Deputy to stand by and wait for assistance. This situation would allow them to handle the situation immediately.

Rep. Bjelobrk stated that her understanding is that this would significantly lessen the interaction time of the officers and make them more efficient in bringing them to the designated facility and then returning to their duties. Rep. Oppel stated that the first step is that someone commits a crime. The first instance is not assuming someone looks like they are undocumented. It is during the process of handling the crime that they would then discover that the person is undocumented. He stated that the Grafton County Sheriff's Department is not going to be actively searching for undocumented people. Sgt. Adams noted that the previous administration was not putting in federal detainers into the NCIC database. They are currently doing that now. Previously, they could release someone at ICE's request, and no one would know they had interacted with them. However, now there is a record that they had contact with someone with a federal detainer and subsequently released them. Rep. Oppel asked if there was a plan to disseminate this information to taxpayers. Sheriff Myers stated that she has had numerous people reach out to her, and she has invited them to come to the Commissioner meeting tomorrow, where she will be discussing the MOA and answering any questions they may have.

Commissioner Piper stated that it is important that the Sheriff will be at the Commissioners' meeting tomorrow. She said that if her questions are answered tomorrow, she will put out a notice. Sheriff Myers noted that these questions will all be easier to answer once they have the training. The questions the Representatives have are the reason they want the training, so they know how to handle it. Rep. Sellers noted that many local towns do not have full-time staff who look at the County for advice, and having this training would be helpful for them. Rep. Franz stated that she sees only good things coming out of this.

### **Comments from the Delegates**

1. Rep. Sellers stated that there are people trying to gain an understanding of County government. He asked if there is a list of primary services that the County provides. He feels that having those bullet points written out would be helpful. Commissioner Piper stated they have had this conversation at the NHAC level. They think the benefits of County Government should be emphasized, and they are working on that.

2. Rep. Oppel stated that the most successful government programs had good communication as the primary driving force. He would encourage the County to be far more aggressive in getting information regarding the ICE contract out to taxpayers. He thinks it is important and a letter to

the editor is a good first step, but noted that relying on people who attend the meeting to provide information word of mouth is not sufficient.

Commissioner Piper stated that a problem she sees is that the Sheriff did not intend to start a fire because she understood the intentions of the program. She does not know if an elected official can anticipate the spread of misinformation. Commissioner McLeod stated that she is not sure if it is misinformation, as they heard a limited amount of information. She said that if everyone reads the MOA like she has, it scares her. They are putting their residents at risk by having more people perform this work. She stated that they hope to have this information cleared up by tomorrow. The Commissioners have heard over the past several years that the Sheriff's Department does not have the staff to handle their statutory mandate, and now they are even more short-staffed, and they are adding this program. She wants to know the financial impact to the County.

Rep. Sykes stated that he was not satisfied with the answers he was given today. Commissioner Hedberg indicated that they found this out through the media. They were unable to get ahead of anything or disseminate information. They are in the process of obtaining information and have received a Material of Agreement (MOA). She feels some of the questions that are out there will be flushed out tomorrow during the Commissioners' meeting.

#### **Next Meeting Date**

May 19, 2025- 9:00 AM – Schedule Budget Meetings Dates: Proposed Dates: Monday 6/2; Friday 6/6; Monday 6/9; Friday 6/13; Monday 6/16 (if needed) – Delegation Meeting 6/23/25  
Budget Vote

#### **Comments of the Delegates**

Rep. Bolton stated that if SB 297 regarding risk pools were to pass, HealthTrust is going to close down on June 30, 2026. The County would be affected as well as municipalities. It is a significant bill that was pushed through the Senate in two (2) weeks. He stated that it should be tracked as it comes through the house, to see what HealthTrust is looking at for an amendment. CA Libby stated that HealthTrust's position on the bill is the opposite of the Secretary of State's, and it is unclear which position is accurate. She stated that as a local government, insured through HealthTrust, it appears it would have a financial impact on the County because if it passes, the County will have to create a capital reserve account that makes them liable if they were to drop below their contingency levels. The other concern is that if SB297 passes and HealthTrust closes, it leaves many municipalities and counties looking for insurance for their employees. She stated that there are two (2) different sides to this story, and the correspondence from each party is very conflicting. She noted that the NHAC is opposed to the bill.

#### **Public Comment**

N. De Mayo stated that he invests a significant amount of time attending these meetings online, as he is unable to be present in person. Mr. De Mayo stated that with regards to the ICE issue, the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798 should take precedence because undocumented aliens are




breaking the law by entering the country. They should be concerned with criminals in Grafton County and people who are already breaking the law by entering the country illegally.

Mr. De Mayo stated that he was cut off by the chair of the Board of Commissioners at a previous meeting when he tried to remind her that she should not be talking in a partisan fashion against their President and his policies. This is a non-partisan group; they are representatives of all citizens in Grafton County, and therefore, they should not talk politics against the President. Mr. De Mayo also noted that he has not seen a picture of the President on the walls at the County complex, and he feels it should be a policy to have a picture of the President hanging there. Mr. De Mayo further expressed concerns regarding the map in the hallway of the Grafton County Administration Building. He stated that he is insulted as a citizen of Sugar Hill because Sugar Hill is not identified as a town in Grafton County on that map. He feels they should redo the map or take it down.

10:50 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Heather Baldwin, Clerk