

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

November 18, 2025

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

OTHERS: HR Director Clough, Sheriff Myers, Traci St. Clair, Tom Closson, Register Monahan, County Attorney Hornick, Tom Cheski, Nick De Mayo – via Teams

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

Commissioner McLeod stated that the Commissioners would go into a nonpublic session for an employee grievance and expected that to last an hour.

MOTION: * 9:07 AM Commissioner Hedberg 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 Piper 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.

* 10:26 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 Sheriff's decision regarding disciplinary action. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

County Attorney Hornick

Atty. Hornick stated that last Friday, they had the North Country Public Safety Foundation meeting to honor first responders, and the Bruno Award was presented to Bri Gerrior

Atty. Hornick presented a contract with the Town of Bridgewater for the Commissioners to sign. She stated that Bridgewater has asked the County Attorney's Office to cover ten (10) misdemeanor cases at \$800 per case. The contract will only run until the end of this fiscal year.

The Bridgewater selectboard already agreed to this contract. The County Attorney's Office has already helped with one (1) case and has another coming. Atty. Hornick stated that they are happy to help the Town of Bridgewater.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the contract with the town of Bridgewater as presented. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Commissioner McLeod asked if there had been more discussion around the Opioid Abatement funding. Atty. Hornick stated that there have been more discussions, and they are still ongoing.

Tom Cheski, Broadband Project Manager – Project Update

T. Cheski stated that he has requested an update from Andrea at Hub66. Andrea has said the easement issue has been sent to Atty. Tanguay. T. Cheski stated that there is a gentleman who lives on a road where new poles were being installed, and it was going to affect the view he has from his house. He requested that they go underground on his property, and he would grant an easement across his property to accomplish this. It is a minor change to their plans for this road. The main contract right now is in the final revision process. They wanted to add details on the timing of when they would start managing the lines. T. Cheski stated that he should see the final draft sent to Atty. Tanguay shortly. He does not see anything to cause alarm, other than the time it is taking to receive this documentation. Andrea has said their attorney is very busy but should have it to them shortly. He is hoping to get it by tomorrow.

Commissioner McLeod stated that the Commissioners presented a report to the Executive Committee yesterday on this project, and they talked about waiting for permits from the Department of Transportation

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the November 4th meeting.

Commissioner Piper stated that she wants to clarify something that was stated in the November 4th minutes. She stated that Register Monahan had made the following comment on page 3:

“When Commissioner Piper stated that she had heard from the public on the Register of Deeds, and stated that who would have thought the public cared about the Register of Deeds.”

Commissioner Piper stated that it was not correct and not what she said. Commissioner Piper stated that they were talking about the feedback they had heard from elected officials and members of the public, and those comments were introduced with the idea that there might be some changes or downsizes. The Register of Deeds is a constitutional office and is very important in any county. Commissioner Piper stated that they were talking about the decision to move the office to the courthouse, which had been repeatedly requested by the Register of Deeds, and whether they should reconsider that move to keep down on expenses. Register

Monahan was present for the meeting and stated that she would like the Commissioners to prove that she requested to move in emails or minutes. Commissioner McLeod asked what she would like to change in the November 4th minutes. Admin. Asst. Norcross explained that no changes to the November 4th minutes were made. What was stated in the minutes was correct, and Commissioner Piper was clarifying for the record in this meeting.

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

2. The Commissioners signed check registers: 1059 - 1064; 2025-11.07.2025

3. Employee Grievance Vote from 11/4/25 meeting

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to uphold the decision of the Nursing Home Administrator in regard to the employee grievance from November 4th. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4. Commissioner McLeod signed the following CDBG Drawdowns:

GRDC - \$ 2,500.00

NHARDC - \$7,807.22

5. Conway Fire Department Agreement – Livermore, CA Libby explained that the county has had an agreement for accidents on the Kancamagus Highway. It is now with the Conway Fire Department and not the Conway Village Fire Department. They charge \$250 per hour with a 2-hour minimum. They cover a 12-mile stretch on the Kancamagus Highway. She stated that this contract is for four (4) years, and it is the same contract that has been in place.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the agreement between the Conway Fire Department and Grafton County for the Unincorporated Place of Livermore. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

6. October Financial Reports – CA Libby stated that the County has received tax payments from four (4) communities. Woodstock's payment was received yesterday. She explained that this week is a big cash demand week with payroll, the NH Retirement System bill, and the state bill, but stated that she does not believe the county will need to draw down any more funds. CA Libby stated that she is hoping they receive a few more tax checks and do not need to draw down anymore on the Tax Anticipation Note.

Revenue – CA Libby reported that revenue looks good through the first four (4) months. Where they are lagging behind is not a concern, as most of them are timing issues.

Expense – CA Libby stated that some departments are showing unfavorable variances, but that is mostly due to payments that are made in full at the beginning of the fiscal year and the third payroll in August.

Prorated Report – CA Libby stated that they are on target for revenue and slightly under expended. She stated that they have discussed the Department of Corrections and their concerns about the population and the medical trends they are seeing. They will continue to monitor and take a deep dive look at the six (6) month mark. She stated that they cannot control the number of inmates they take in or the medical issues they are coming in with.

7. Monthly Update of Funding from Misc Sources – CA Libby reviewed the attached spreadsheet.

8. Courthouse – CA Libby stated that they had an hour and a half good conversation about the courthouse at yesterday's Executive Committee meeting. The outcome was that the Executive Committee had a 7-2 vote to address the following three (3) concerns:

1. Go back to the state and discuss lease terms and what commitment they can give.
2. Relook at the size and scope of the building.
3. Continue to work on the design of the building once they identify any changes they felt would be appropriate.

Supt. Oakes discussed with the Executive Committee the difficulties in repairing piece by piece, with the need to relocate staff and the cascading effects of starting one project that then leads to repairing more to bring everything up to code.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that she thinks the next appropriate step would be to reconvene the Courthouse Building Committee to re-evaluate. CA Libby stated that some of the decisions that were made in reference to moving the Register of Deeds were a direct decision made by this Board of Commissioners, and if they want to make changes in regard to that, it needs to be a Commissioner decision. Commissioner Hedberg agreed that this is something that needs to be revisited. The Commissioners discussed the concerns regarding a new jury deliberation room that has been included in the project as well. CA Libby explained that, from some perspectives there seems to be a lot of jury space that they do not currently have that can be looked at and further discussed with the state. The state has essentially designed its spaces based on standards across the state. CA Libby stated that there is nothing wrong with going back to all departments within the building to review their spaces. The concerns that have been expressed at their public meetings need to be considered and reviewed. She added that there is just under \$500,000 left in ARPA funds. They can discuss this with Lavalie Brensinger and get a price of what it would look like to reconfigure the building. Commissioner Hedberg noted that there have been many questions on how right-sizing was determined, and she does not have an answer because she is not sure it is a straightforward as it's made out to be. They relied on departments and elected officials based on what they are seeing in their specialties, and they relied a lot on Lavalie Brensinger as they design these types of buildings.

CA Libby stated that they can pay money to have objective studies done, and they can still be wrong, and noted that the Department of Corrections is a perfect example of that. She explained that the County paid a consultant to do an extensive study on future inmate trends. They predicted that in 2025 they would have 193 inmates, but they do not have that. The consultant could not predict bail reform or COVID back in 2007 when the study was done.

Commissioner Piper stated that what she heard most was concerns about the state. Regardless of the size or the scope, the County is reliant on property taxes, and many people want the state to do more. Commissioner Hedberg stated that people are quite sure the state will not pay. She explained that part of this 3-step consensus with the Executive Committee was to find out whether the county could get a longer lease or a rent commitment from the state. Commissioner Piper said she would like a member of the Executive Committee to form their own building committee and talk to the state to see if these fears can be addressed. In regard to the size and

scope, great care was taken regarding building a new DOC, and it was very controversial. As CA Libby said, the experts were wrong, and they are the ones left with a building for 193 inmates. As far as going back to the department heads, she agrees with CA Libby. She was cautious that needs vs wants need to be looked at, but ultimately this falls on the Commissioners.

Commissioner McLeod stated that the current board has to deal with this situation, and she feels they are doing the right thing. This was brought up seven (7) years ago, and it has been carried through until now. She's disappointed in the Delegation. They have a huge responsibility in this, and she is not sure they are paying enough attention. She stated that this is not a partisan thing that it has been made out to be. It is a responsibility they have in county government, and it is their responsibility to move it forward. She stated that she spoke with Representative John Hunt, who received the Legislature of the Year at this year's NHAC Conference and they talked about Cheshire County. He took his responsibility to the county very seriously. He was a part of three (3) buildings and supported them. Commissioner McLeod stated that they need to have some sort of leadership training for their Delegation; they need to learn what their role is and not what the partisan rhetoric is. In the end, the citizens are paying even more money because it is being pushed out, and they are paying more operational costs for the current building. They need people who do what's best for the citizens of Grafton County and not their personal issues. Commissioner Hedberg stated that what she got out of the Executive Committee discussion is that the representatives recognized something needs to get done, but they are not all on the same page moving forward. They want to go back a bit to see if they can make changes and get a consensus.

Commissioner Piper stated that there has been a lot of finger-pointing, and she thinks that Supt. Oakes has done a very good job in maintaining the infrastructure of this county campus.

Commissioner McLeod stated that it sounds like they need to convene a Courthouse Building Committee Meeting. Commissioner Hedberg asked if they wanted to see if there is a member of the Executive Committee who wants to be on the building committee. Commissioner Piper stated that Rep. Sykes has expressed disappointment that someone from the Executive Committee was not asked to be on the committee. CA Libby stated that they need to be careful not to cross any lines. They need to understand that the Executive Committee's role is not the operation of the county. The representatives get to decide how this project is paid for. The Courthouse Building Committee meetings are public, and anyone can attend. CA Libby stated that if the Commissioners think that is the best direction to make an Executive Committee member a voting member, that is fine, but she wants to make sure they do not blur lines. She stated that yesterday, it was stated that the Executive Committee is the Commissioners' boss, and that is not true. Commissioner Piper stated that CA Libby is right. She would suggest having them in an advisory role. They have said anyone can attend these meetings, but no one besides Rep. Bjelobrk does.

Commissioners agreed to reconvene the building committee. They welcome any Delegation member to attend the meetings and will let them know when they will be.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that the Commissioners have asked a lot of administrative staff to reach out to the courts, and she is not convinced they will give more than what they are giving now due to budget restrictions. CA Libby stated that the county has a commitment letter from the state, but it is vague and only includes the court space and not common spaces. It does not talk about lease figures. She further explained that they likely would not be occupying a new building

for another four (4) years and questioned if the county wants the state to commit to fair market value for leasing now and not what it is in four (4) years. CA Libby stated that they can start discussing this next spring, once they get square footage nailed down.

Commissioner's Issues:

1. Commissioner Hedberg recognized the following Grafton County Employees who received awards at the New Hampshire Association of Counties Conference.

- County Team of the Year - Register of Deeds
- Corrections Officer of the Year – Levi Buxton
- Sheriff's Department Employee of the Year - Kathleen Donovan
- County Employee of the Year - Lilli Cargil
- Nursing Home Employee of the Year - Lora Chase

2. Commissioner Piper stated that an adjustment was made to the NHAC dues. There is a \$1,000 adjustment per county for long-term care. They are asking a little more than was originally proposed to ensure they have robust funds going forward.

3. Commissioner McLeod stated that Grafton County is hosting next year's New Hampshire Association of Counties Conference. CA Libby stated that she plans to reach out county-wide and develop a planning committee. She does not think it should all fall on the Commissioners' Office staff, and there are a lot of ideas and people that work here they can tap into.

Commissioner McLeod noted that she attended the long-term care session at the conference. There was a lot of discussion around managed care and a lot of eye-opening comments from county staff around the state, with a lot of concern regarding the use of a managed care company.

Public Comment:

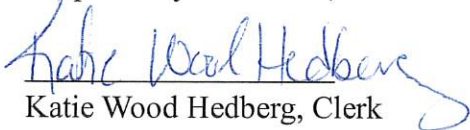
1. Register Monahan stated that during their banking reconciliation last month, her office noticed they were no longer collecting interest on one of their accounts and started a conversation with CA Libby. They did some switching around of their bank accounts to get better interest. Register Monahan stated in regard to the NHAC Conference, their affiliate brought in DRA, and last year they had brought in the Secretary of State. She discussed a past webinar that was held in Orford and stated that they did a great job explaining equalization. She stated that it is located on the DRA website and recommended everyone watch it, as it would calm a lot of concerns about how the process works. Register Monahan stated that she attended the conservation commission session at the NHAC conference and noted that they have new, younger leadership that has new, interesting, and innovative ideas. She felt the conference was very well organized and presented. Register Monahan then stated in regard to the discussion of the courthouse, it is so disturbing where they are with all of this. She urges everyone to focus on what the greater good is for all citizens of Grafton County, rather than partisan leaning and personal feelings.

2. Nick De Mayo asked for more time to speak because Ron Willoughby received more time yesterday at the Executive Committee meeting. Commissioner McLeod stated that it was not the

Commissioners' meeting; this meeting is, and he will receive three (3) minutes as he normally does. N. De Mayo recommends the Commissioners read the email he sent to them. N. De Mayo stated that Commissioner McLeod mentioned in her comments that her sole focus is on the courthouse and letting the people of Grafton County deal with their own personal issues. He stated that he does not think Commissioner McLeod should be unconcerned with the personal problems of the people of Grafton County, as they have exorbitant bills. People will be forced to leave. Commissioner McLeod stated that North Country people are survivors. People who may move into the county may want to look at that. She stated that N. De Mayo can misquote her, but he is inaccurate and misinformed. N. De Mayo stated that this is part of the arrogance of the Commissioner Board. They do not want to listen to the public. As public officials and servants, they need to listen. As taxpayers, they have the right to criticize them. N. De Mayo stated that the county needs public buy-in. Rather than putting an Executive Committee member on the Building Committee, they should put an ad in the paper. Many people could offer advice on the courthouse.

12:21 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

Grafton County Funding

10/31
9/30/2025

Program	Balance Received	Funds Obligated	Funds Spent	Balance Available
LATCF	\$ 577,330.50	\$ 87,433.91	\$ 62,166.09	\$ 427,730.50
Interest Earned - ARPA	\$ 757,171.12	\$ 214,430.09	\$ 268,857.98	\$ 273,883.05
Opioid Abatement Funds	\$ 1,105,613.29	\$ 474,889.87	\$ 318,542.67	\$ 312,180.75