

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
January 6, 2026

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

OTHERS: HR Director Clough, Nursing Home Administrator Labore, Maintenance Supt. Oakes, Tom Closson – via Teams, Janice Ann Novak – via Teams, Laura Sokoloski – via Teams, Nick De Mayo – Via Teams, Omer C. Ahern Jr. – via Teams

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

Attorney Tom Closson arrived

MOTION: 9:10 AM Commissioner Hedberg moved to temporarily adjourn the meeting for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Commissioner McLeod stated that they would now adjourn the public meeting for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel. The public must leave the room, and the door will be closed.

9:28 AM Commissioner McLeod reconvened the meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to accept the Teamsters Local #633 Tentative Agreement for the Sheriff's Department employees. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

HR Director Clough arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

1. Respiratory Virus – NHA Labore stated that during December, the Maple Unit was hit with a respiratory virus. It has not been the flu, Covid, or RSV, but the unit is still closed. NHA Labore stated that several residents were admitted to the hospital, which has slightly skewed their admission and discharge numbers.
2. January 1, 2026, Medicaid Rate – NHA Labore reported that there has been a \$2.90 reduction and the new rate is \$250.10, effective January 1st. He stated that they had prepared the budget using last year's rate, which is lower than the new rate, and therefore, this now means they will receive a \$2.33 increase, based on the numbers in the budget.
3. Commissioner Memo re: Secure Care Wander Guard System – NHA Labore requested a bid waiver for the purchase of the Secure Care Wander Guard System. During his budget presentation, he explained that they have several residents with dementia who reside in all of

their units, and in order to ensure their safety, they are requesting to add additional Secure Care monitors at points of entry and exit on the Granite, Maple, and Profile neighborhoods. NHA Labore explained that ESL Distributing LLC, from Pittsfield, New Hampshire, is the vendor that installed their Secure Care system in the Meadow neighborhood and the vendor that they have used for subsequent work on it. He added that they have developed a very good working relationship with the owner and have found their communication and quality of work to be very good. They have been onsite to review the expansion locations and addressed the scope of work with the Supt. Oakes to ensure seamless installation. Commissioner Piper stated that it is very important to serve their residents. The quote is \$7,485.70 higher than the amount that was budgeted. The overage is due to increased prices in materials that the vendor is seeing, due to the tariffs. There is no fiscal impact to the Nursing Home expense budget, as this was budgeted in the capital reserve account. NHA Labore noted that the overage will be absorbed by the roughly \$10,000 in savings they have with the door automation project.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to accept the nursing home administrator's request to waive the competitive bidding process and accept the quote submitted by ESL Distributing, LLC for the installation of eleven (11) Doorguardian Universal Exit Panels and installation materials as outlined on estimate #13085 for a total purchase price of \$48,507.02. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Superintendent Oakes arrived to open bids

The Commissioners opened bids for the Nursing Home Landscape Project. Three (3) bids were received as follows

Turnstone Corp.	Nashua, NH	\$1,398,460.00
Bread Loaf Corp.	Middlebury, VT	\$1,184,900.00
Murray's Market	Bradford, VT	\$783,349.88

CA Libby stated that there is \$724,648 available from the grant for this project. Supt. Oakes stated that he will have to review the bids, and he will return next week with a recommendation.

Supt. Oakes informed the Commissioners of an issue with an underground storage fuel tank at the Department of Corrections that has been contaminated. He stated that this could potentially be an expensive fix, and he would keep the Commissioners updated.

Courthouse Building Committee Update (*see attached)

Commissioner Piper stated that she is not comfortable making changes to the courthouse; the state needs to do that. She is also concerned about other changes that have been made. She wants the courthouse to have staying power for these departments into the future, and she does not want them to end up with a product that is not what it needs to be. They are jumping through hoops to try to make this passable to taxpayers, and she does not know if there is anything else they can do. They have discussed the Register of Deeds situation; she and Commissioner McLeod feel strongly that the Register of Deeds needs to be in the new courthouse. At the public

sessions, there was so much feedback that had nothing to do with these reductions. Supt. Oakes stated that the Building Committee put these suggestions together because the Executive Committee asked that reductions be made. Commissioner Piper stated that this is in the hands of the Delegation.

CA Libby stated that a lot of the feedback they received is that the State of New Hampshire is not paying for this building, but they are dictating how much space they need. CA Libby stated that she thinks they need to go back to the courts. Commissioner Piper noted that she does not think removing the Register of Deeds from the courthouse will make the project pass.

Supt. Oakes stated that they are at an impasse. The committee has done what they were asked to do. Commissioner McLeod stated that she is in favor of having Lavalley Brensinger redesign the building with the changes that have been suggested. Commissioner Piper stated that they need to inform the state that they are making these changes, looking at downsizing, and they will do their best to meet the needs of the state. She stated that Rep. Hunt is a very smart, fiscally conservative republican who just received the legislator of the year award with the NHAC and thinks that maybe he could assist with this impasse. Commissioner McLeod suggested that the chair and vice-chair of the Delegation invite him to a meeting.

Commissioner Hedberg suggested that they go back to the judicial system, tell them the county is making changes to the design, and would like them to be involved. She would like to defer to CA Libby and Supt. Oakes, who has gone through building projects and what their thoughts are. Supt. Oakes stated that the Sheriff's big concern is security and having the courts on the first floor. He stated that the process of moving them to the first floor has a domino effect, but there may be an opportunity for consolidation in doing that.

Commissioner Piper stated that Sheriff Myers was in attendance and asked her to weigh in on her request. Sheriff Myers stated that if people are coming in on the first floor and there is a large lobby space with numerous departments, their staff has to monitor that as well as staircases and the 2nd floor. She noted that they have trouble finding court security officers as well. Sheriff Myers stated that they asked the court security to take a tally of who comes in the front door and where they are going. They reported that at least 75% of the people coming in are for the courts, and this is why they are requesting that the design be redone to move the courts to the first floor.

Commissioner Piper stated that the fee from Lavalley Brensinger to make these changes they are asking for with the design would be \$34,210.

The Commissioners further reviewed and discussed the document that Supt. Oakes presented and agreed to have LaValley Brensinger redesign the courthouse.

Supt. Oakes suggested that they reconvene the Courthouse Building Committee and meet with Lavalley Brensinger, the State of New Hampshire, and the Sheriff.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to accept the proposal from Lavalley Brensinger to start reevaluating the plans for \$34,210.00 out of ARPA funds and have the

Courthouse Building Committee reconvene to start exploring these options.
Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Agenda Items

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the December 16th meeting. Commissioner Piper had a grammatical edit.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the minutes from the December 16th meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1082-1088; 1092; 2025-02.19.2025 & 2026-01.02.2026.

3. Federal Mileage Rate 2026 – CA Libby reported that the new federal mileage rate has increased 2.5 cents to 72.5 cents, and the County normally adopts the federal rate.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to set the county mileage rate to 72.5 cents for 2026. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4. CA Libby reviewed the following 2026 Holiday List with the Commissioners:

New Year's Day		Thursday		January 1, 2026	
Martin Luther King Jr./Civil Rights Day		Monday		January 19, 2026	
President's Day		Monday		February 16, 2026	
Memorial Day		Monday		May 25, 2026	
Juneteenth		Friday		June 19, 2026	
Independence Day		Friday		July 3, 2026	*
Independence Day		Saturday		July 4, 2026	
Labor Day		Monday		September 7, 2026	
Indigenous Peoples' Day/Columbus Day		Monday		October 12, 2026	
Election Day		Tuesday		November 3, 2026	**
Veterans' Day		Wednesday		November 11, 2026	
Thanksgiving		Thursday		November 26, 2026	
Day after Thanksgiving		Friday		November 27, 2026	***
Christmas Day		Friday		December 25, 2026	

*Administrative Offices will observe the holiday on Friday, 7/3/26

** Election Day is a floating holiday for all county staff

***Day after Thanksgiving is a Floating Holiday for UE Bargaining Unit Members

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the 2026 holiday schedule as presented. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

5. The Commissioners reviewed the GCDOC Superior Court List for December.

6. November Financial Reports – CA Libby stated that things continue to not change much from October. The Nursing Home is ahead on its revenue, and they continue to be ahead on its census. The areas below revenue are mostly timing-related. CA Libby stated that all of their money is now invested, and taxes are fully collected. The general fund account had \$30,000 in interest for December. They should see an increase in interest earnings in January. On the expense side, some departments are tracking over expended but noted that it is not significant. CA Libby stated that there are three (3) payrolls in January, and that will skew their numbers as well.

Prorated Report – CA Libby stated that they are on target for revenue and on target for expenditures.

7. Other funding sources update – CA Libby reviewed the attached sheet with the Commissioners.

8. CA Libby discussed the language that was included in the Teamsters union contract regarding the COLA and setting that same language for the employee council and the union at the Nursing Home, so all employees are under the same policy. She stated that she would tell the department heads to include the CPIU in the budgets they prepare, so the budgets the Commissioners initially receive would include the COLA. CA Libby stated that she would work with HR Director Clough to come up with language to present to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner McLeod stated that the State of New Hampshire received \$204 million for the Rural Healthcare Transformation grant. The plan does include language in one of the objectives around EMS. She suggested that they send a letter to Executive Councilor Hill and Senator Prentiss to get more information. Commissioner Hedberg reported that the NH Charitable Foundation had a donor who gave \$5,000. They have been working with the town manager of Rumney, who was able to accept that money and put it in a separate account. When everything gets going, that money will be here. In March, at town meetings, this EMS District proposal should be on the agendas of those towns included to conditionally approve the district. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she thinks they are looking to start some things before the district is officially set up because they need help covering all of the towns.

2. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she met with the new Conservation District Office Manager, and she shared a lot of information. There is a webinar starting this Thursday on invasive species. Commissioner McLeod asked if L. Sokoloski would want to consider being a part of their agenda. L. Sokoloski stated that she looks forward to meeting with the Commissioners and providing updates.

3. CA Libby stated that next week's meeting is at 9:00 am, not in the afternoon as previously discussed. She stated that the public hearing was changed to the 27th. That meeting will now be moved to 2:00 pm.

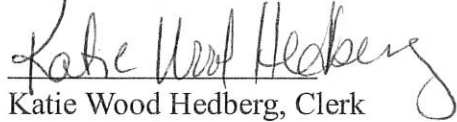
Public Comment

Nick De Mayo stated that during the meeting, the County Administrator said she doesn't foresee any significant costs, but Supt. Oakes reported that there was fuel contamination. He stated that

they should consider having a vendor come in to do the transfer of fuels, rather than training the staff every two (2) years. N. De Mayo asked about the other group getting the COLA besides the Teamsters. Commissioner McLeod stated that the minutes will have that information. N. De Mayo then asked why the Nursing Home's bid was waived. He stated that there has been a lot of fraud going on in Minnesota regarding federal grant money and asked if the county ever looks into our grant funds, if there is any fraud, and if so, who looks into that fraud.

11:43 AM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

Grafton County Human Resources Report
Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
January 6, 2026

HR Activity Report (12/09/2025-01/06/2026)

• ***New Hires***

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>Position(s)</u>
Nursing Home	4 (3 FT, 1 PD)	1 FT RN, 1 FT LNA, 1 PD LNA, 1 FT Dietary Aide
Sheriff's Dept	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Deputy

Separations

<u>Departments</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home	5 (2 FT, 3 PD)	2 PD LNA, 1 PD RN , 2 FT LNA
Corrections	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Officer
Sheriff	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Deputy
County Atty's Office	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Asst. CA

Reasons:

Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 2
Termination –
Deceased -
New job/career change – 2
Relocated – 1
School –
Retirement – 3
Not Reappointed -
Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements -
Other –

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 Unit Aide/LNA students to LNA, 1 per diem LNA to FT, 1 Dietary Aide to FT LNA, 1 per diem MNA to PT 3/5 status

Active Leave of Absences December 9th to present

<u>Department</u>	<u>#</u>	
Nursing Home – Nursing	12	(10 are intermittent, 8 for self, 4 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	11	(10 are intermittent, 6 for family, 5 self)
County Atty's Office	2	(2 intermittent, 2 self)
HR Department	2	(2 intermittent, 1 family, 1 self)
Department of Corrections	4	(2 intermittent, 3 family, 1 self)
Alt. Sentencing	2	(1 intermittent family, 1 intermittent self)
Maintenance	1	(1 self)
TOTAL	34	

Scheduled to orient 01/07

1 FT Dietary Aide
1 FT LNA
1 FT LPN

Current Jobs posted/advertised

LNA's/Unit Aides (11.15 FTE's vacant)

RN/LPN (8.05 FTE's vacant combined)

MNA

Correctional Officer (2 FTE vacant)

Corrections Cook (1 PT / 1 FT)

Other Business: HR will be rolling out a 9 week wellness campaign to begin at the end of January – “Making it Stick” and the , Reviewing LNA program and organizing a class to begin towards the end of February, beginning ACA reporting process for 2025, working on healthcare options for FY 27

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: January 06, 2026

Census

Medicare: 5
NH Medicaid: 62 (11 Pending)
VT. Medicaid: 22 (2 Pending)
VA: 7
Hospice: 2
Private: 26
Total Census: 124

FY '26 Budgeted Census

Medicare: 4
NH Medicaid: 73
VT. Medicaid: 21
VA: 8
Hospice: 0
Private: 18
Budgeted Census: 124

Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 14
Deceased Residents: 4
Discharges: 9

Other Topics:

- 1) Respiratory Virus**
- 2) January 1, 2026 Medicaid Rate**
- 3) Commissioner Memo re: Secure Care Wander Guard System**

Grafton County Funding

11/30/2025

Program		Balance Received	Funds Obligated	Funds Spent	Balance Available
LATCF		\$ 577,330.50	\$ 86,709.41	\$ 62,890.59	\$ 427,730.50
Interest Earned - ARPA		\$ 761,071.98	\$ 206,384.64	\$ 276,903.43	\$ 277,783.91
Opioid Abatement Funds		\$ 1,105,613.29	\$ 464,000.43	\$ 329,432.01	\$ 312,180.85