

GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
November 17, 2025

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Register Monahan, Treasurer Cryans, Anne Duncan Cooley – Grafton Regional Development Corporation, Michelle Beaudin – Grafton Regional Development Corporation, Ron Willoughby, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Emilie Smith – via Teams, Janice Novak – via Teams, Alex Nuti-de Biasi – via Teams

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

Rep. Sykes stated that the first item of business to be completed was the approval of the minutes from the September 22nd meeting.

MOTION: Rep. Bolton moved to approve the minutes from the September 22nd meeting. Rep. Bjelobrk seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Treasurer Cryans arrived and gave the following Treasurer’s Report:

TO: GRAFTON COUNTY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
FROM: MICHAEL CRYANS, TREASURER
SUBJECT: TREASURER’S REPORT
DATE: NOVEMBER 17, 2025



CURRENT CASH POSITION (as of 10/31/2025)

Grafton County General Fund

Checking Account (ICS @ 4.15%)	\$	719,109.33 (Bar Harbor Bank & Trust)
Investment Account Money Market (4.29%)	\$	29,883.09 (NH Public Deposit Invest. Pool)
Investment Account (ICS @ 3.85%)	\$	22,812.51 (Mascoma Savings Bank)
Investment Account ICS @ 4.10%	\$	45,201.07 (Bank of NH)
Investment Account (ICS @ 1.98%)	\$	7,567.28 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Investment Acct. (Checking)	\$	52,152.21 (Bar Harbor Bank & Trust)

Grafton County Reserved/Dedicated Accounts

Deeds Surcharge ICS (3.93%)	\$	311,926.42 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Dispatch Capital Reserve ICS (3.93%)	\$	107,278.17 (Claremont Savings Bank)
Nursing Home Capital Reserve (4.00%)	\$	666,411.23 (Camden Bank)
American Rescue Plans Funds (4.10%)	\$	1,229,369.34 (Bank of NH)

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NTIA Letter of Credit ICS (4.10%) \$ 3,040,708.33 (Bank of NH)

RECENT TRANSACTIONS of NOTE

- The Combined Accumulated interest in the current fiscal year (7/1/25-10/31/25) is \$27,423.23. The FY '26 budget is \$275,300.
- Tax Invoices have been sent out – we have received payment from three (3) towns. Taxes are due on December 17th.
- FY 2026 Tax Anticipation Note: We secured a \$12,000,000 line of credit from Bar Harbor Bank at an interest rate of 4.65%. Through November 7, 2025, we have drawn down \$7,250,000.
- Investment letters will be going out at the beginning of December to develop our Investment Plan for taxes to be received.

MOTION: Rep. Stringham moved to approve the Treasurer's Report. Rep. Baldwin seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

Anne Duncan Cooley & Michelle Beaudin – Grafton Regional Development Corporation

A. Duncan Cooley reviewed the following handout *(see attached)

She explained that GRDC works closely with businesses to become bankable; they help them with startup costs and work directly with local banks to put in a piece of the loan to allow them to make a loan work.

A. Duncan Cooley stated that GRDC runs both the Plymouth Enterprise Center & Dartmouth Regional Technical Center business incubators.

A. Duncan Cooley stated that GRDC receives funding from the NH Charitable Foundation and a foundation out of Hypertherm to work on workforce issues in childcare, as well as facilities issues.

M. Beaudin stated that she works with the Microenterprise Program, which provides grants to small businesses with five (5) employees or fewer, with owners being low to moderate income. M. Beaudin stated that they provide equipment grants up to \$5,000. These businesses are eligible for three(3) years, and they hope that the businesses are no longer eligible after those three (3) years.

Rep. Franz asked how GRDC is funded. A. Duncan Cooley stated that they have a diverse funding stream. GRDC receives funding from the County. They also receive rent from business incubators, and those pay for the expense of the buildings. GRDC receives income through their loans and they have various public and private grants as well. A. Duncan Cooley stated that they

receive funding from the NH Community Finance Authority for the Microenterprise Program as well.

Rep. Sellers asked if anyone has defaulted on loans. A. Duncan Cooley stated that they do sometimes, but they are fortunate to have a solid portfolio. GRDC has a loan officer who is a retired banker, and he looks carefully at the loans they receive. She explained that they do not approve them all, and they do sometimes tell people that they are not in a good position to take on a loan.

A. Duncan Cooley thanked the Executive Committee for their time and stated that if anyone has any questions, they can reach out.

Commissioner McLeod gave the following Commissioner's Report:

Commissioners' Report
November 17, 2025

Nursing Home:

- The nursing home's census is currently 127. Our budgeted census for FY'26 is 124; we have been at that census or exceeding it since July 1st. Our payer mix varies somewhat from what we budgeted, but still, with the numbers being higher, we will maintain our revenue projections.

Department of Corrections:

- The current in-house census is 109, with another 20 out of the facility. We have 39 in pretrial services. We continue to see an increase in the number of housed inmates. This is due to bail reform law changes that have taken effect. We budgeted for an average daily census of 90. To date, our average daily population has been 96.
- We have also seen a dramatic increase in medical expenses for inmates this fiscal year. As the census increases, we have more medically needy inmates. Inmates are arriving, still going up on the substances they have taken, sometimes illicit drugs and sometimes alcohol, and reaching overdose status in jail. We have had several incidents of OD-related medical emergencies this fiscal year already; one resulted in a multi-day hospital stay. With bail reform, judges are more reluctant to release an inmate on PR bail for medical reasons. Another additional expense incurred from medical emergencies requiring hospitalization is that every time we take an inmate to the hospital, it costs 26-30 hours of OT a day for one officer to travel and sit with the inmate in 12-hour shifts. Unless the inmate is in maximum custody, we need to send two officers per shift, and the cost doubles. All of these are having an impact on the fiscal year 2026 budget. We will continue to monitor the impacts these are having on the budget.

Broadband Update:

- Due to the delays, we did request a one-year extension to 8/31/26. It is anticipated that it will take until the summer of 2026 to finish the project.

- Construction began on May 21, 2025
- This project includes 5,671 utility poles – we are working with seven (7) different Utility and Telcom companies to work through the Pole Licensing process. This is a significant number of poles and is a slow process. At this point, we have 1108 poles fully licensed and ready to have fiber installed. There are 10,247 pole applications to be reviewed and approved (many poles require multiple licenses from both utility and telco). The licenses are spread out across the project area, and as such, construction is slower because there are not long continuous spans to be completed.
- Through November 7th, 24.23 miles of aerial fiber have been installed out of 198.8 miles, and 8.18 miles of duct/conduit have been installed underground out of 9.1 miles. 65 handholes/vaults have been installed out of 95 handholes. Underground construction has essentially stopped because we are waiting on permits from the Department of Transportation, Rail and Transit Bureau. These permits were requested quite some time ago, and communication from the Rail & Transit Bureau is very infrequent. At this point, construction will likely resume in the spring. Fortunately, there is very little underground left.
- Currently, the plan is to continue with aerial construction throughout the winter as pole licenses and make-ready are completed.

Courthouse Update:

- Public Information Meetings were held in Bristol, Plymouth, Littleton, and Lebanon throughout October. We heard a lot of feedback and received some great suggestions. Our next step was to come back to the Executive Committee and Delegation to seek more input as to the information that you would like to have regarding the project. There is a section on the agenda for a specific conversation about the Courthouse.

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. Currently, six (6) open projects have obligations totaling \$674,827 that will be paid out over the next fourteen (14) months. 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:

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

Grafton County EMS Study

- The County has hired Municipal Resources Inc (MRI) to do a study of EMS (Emergency Medical Services) available throughout the County. This study is still in progress.

NH Rural Health Transformation Program – Grafton County Rural Communities EMS Collaborative Response

- Grafton County submitted an application for \$4,905,657 to the State of NH to be included with their requests to CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services).

The following are the key components of the grant initiative:

- Grafton County proposes to create access to emergency services delivery for our most rural communities through a collaborative regional model in three (3) regions of our rural county. Working together, our most rural towns will participate in a collaborative regional model to provide emergency care through a regional EMS infrastructure—establishing a modern, sustainable system for access to care across the most rural and underserved regions of our state.
- EMS and 911 are often the most reliable, and sometimes only, points of healthcare access for rural residents. Yet many of our rural EMS agencies have folded and left residents with limited access to these life-saving services. Larger communities and health care facilities are too often an hour or more away and have limited ability to provide services for the most rural communities without significant support to operate a larger system of emergency care.
- Ensuring access to high-quality EMS services is growing more and more difficult for EMS ambulance agencies in rural areas around the country. Many rural EMS agencies are finding challenges to successfully respond to changing reimbursement policies, regulations, and community needs, and it is significantly harder to recruit and retain quality staff (paid or volunteer). Changing technology is challenging as there is often a lack of broadband, and the population is increasingly elderly with substantial needs. In order to succeed in the future, rural EMS agencies must galvanize community support, develop strong partnerships and collaboration, and utilize new innovations to maintain and enhance quality.
- Start-up funds will be distributed to up to four EMS services leading the regional collaboration of communities that have agreed to partner. Funds would be used to develop the cooperative agreements, and for personnel, equipment, medical supplies,

building renovation, and program start-up costs necessary to organize and develop the regional system of emergency services.

- Funds will be used to train local community members as First Responders and as EMS providers in their communities to provide a career ladder and supply of EMS providers. Additional training will be provided to the local community responders on telehealth integration, chronic-disease management, and patient navigation skills to ensure readiness for their role in participating and supporting the regional EMS service.
- Outcomes will include an increase in the number of patients appropriately provided emergency services, an increased number of communities covered by EMS services, improved timeliness of care for rural residents, enhanced sustainability of rural EMS services, and strengthened collaborative partnerships among rural communities. Strengthening the workforce will produce an increased number of EMS providers and First Responders trained annually in rural areas, an increase in the total number of training program graduates working in rural areas, and an increase in retention rates of rural EMS professionals.
- The grant request is for \$4,905,657. The pilot program would be run by the Plymouth Fire Department and be in the towns of Hebron, Warren, Wentworth, Rumney, Groton, and Dorchester. It would also include the Glencliff Home for the Elderly. The application had letters of support from all the towns listed, as well as Senator Prentiss and Plymouth Fire Chief Pierce.

Rep. Stringham asked if there is a summary from the courthouse informational sessions.

Commissioner McLeod stated that the audio is recorded and the PowerPoint presentations are available as well. She noted that from the beginning, the questions they received at each meeting were included in the next meeting's PowerPoint. The final presentation had the most information. CA Libby stated that they do not have a written summary. There were 4-5 key issues that could easily be identified from the discussions that were had. Rep. Sellers stated that the minutes from the Courthouse Informational Meetings did not have any of the discussion, only the overview of the presentation, and asked if anyone was going to be adding to those. Commissioner McLeod stated that the audio of those meetings is available. Rep. Spahr asked where they could find those, and Commissioner McLeod stated that he could request them from the staff. CA Libby stated that the audio recordings are too large to upload to the website without paying the website host more money. She stated that they are happy to send those recordings to anyone who wants them.

MOTION: Rep. Oppel moved to approve the Commissioners' Report. Rep. Franz seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

CA Libby gave the following County Administrators Report:

County Administrator's Report
November 17, 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 17th every year. We are essentially out of cash and operating on incoming revenues and our line of credit for a TAN of up to \$12,000,000. To date, we have drawn down \$7,250,000. We have also started to receive some tax money.
- ❖ 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 four (4) months complete.

Nursing Home Revenue:

Payer Source	FY 2026 Budget	FY 2026 YTD Actuals
NH Medicaid	73	66
VT Medicaid	20	20
Medicare	4	2
Private Pay	18	27
Veterans	9	10
Total	124	125

- In fiscal year 2026, we budgeted for a census of 124, broken down by the payor sources as listed above. The current census at the nursing home is 127. We are showing a favorable revenue variance.
- Proshare/Bed Tax – ProShare is a lump sum payment received in June. Bed Tax is paid quarterly. ProShare is an unknown amount. We have collected no revenue for these categories as of yet in FY'26. The first quarter payment did arrive on Friday, 11/17/25, in the amount of \$461,471.37, which is tracking on target for the budget.
- The Department of Corrections currently shows a slight unfavorable variance due to the timing of grant payments from the State of NH.
- The farm shows a favorable variance of \$22,317.87. This is due to farm stand and miscellaneous revenues being almost fully collected. We are also ahead on the Sale of Livestock.
- The Sheriff's Department shows a favorable variance of \$79,706.11.

- 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 one (1) contract with the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association. This shows an unfavorable position due to the timing of receipt of payments.
- Alternative Sentencing is currently showing an unfavorable variance of \$25,129.19. That is due to the timing of revenue collection.
- The Register of Deeds revenue shows a favorable variance of \$88,395.27.
- Interest income shows an unfavorable variance of \$64,343.44. This is due to the cash being depleted in the beginning months of the fiscal year. This is projected to recover once tax payments are received and monies are invested.

Overall revenues are trending on target for the fiscal year 2026 budget.

Expenses

- Through four (4) months, the variance report shows several departments with negative variances. This is due to a couple of things. First, we pay our Property-Liability and Workers’ Comp insurance in full for the fiscal year in July. Second, the only principal bond payment we have is paid on July 1st and lastly, we had three (3) payrolls in August, which skews the numbers for several months. These numbers have improved since the last report.
- ❖ 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.
 - 33.33% 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 October reports, we are at 33.61%, over revenue by \$154,544. We are at 32.85% or under-expended by \$280,482.
- Over-Expenditure Report—This report shows any over-expended line item at month-end. There are several accounts on the report at this time. The most significant of which is the Nightwatchman lines. The position was eliminated for FY’26, but the

person worked until 6/28/25, which was paid out of FY'26, not FY'25. We will transfer funds to cover this.

CA Libby stated that the inmate population will need to be watched. She explained that some of the numbers are skewed, but at the end of six (6) months they will do a deeper dive.

MOTION: Rep. Spahr moved to approve the County Administrator's Report. Rep. Stringham seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

New Business

Rep. Beaulier ICE Resolution – Rep. Sellers asked why this resolution was tabled and what needs to be changed. Rep. Oppel stated that the concern at the Delegation meeting was that the resolution was redundant. He does not feel the Delegation needs a resolution supporting the constitution. There was a state law that was passed, and passing a resolution seemed redundant at best. Rep. Spahr stated that he agrees. They do not do resolutions for all other RSAs. This is not necessary, and he feels they are wasting their time. Rep. Sykes stated that the law being referred to goes into effect in January 2026. He cannot imagine where county government has ever not followed state law. It is the obligation of the government to follow the law. He stated that he is not sure if he wants to set a precedent to vote on resolutions like this as the Executive Committee. It is a proper thing for the Representative to bring it before the legislative body, and they spoke about it at the last meeting. Rep. Sellers stated that this goes back to the June timeframe when the Commissioners adopted a statement of inclusivity, saying that Grafton County will allow anyone into their county and use their funds if necessary to help. Since they are the Executive Committee, he believes they should support the Sheriff to ensure illegal aliens are not staying in this county, and they are not paying for them. Not all residents in the County supported that statement and noted a petition that was sent around and only signed by and he is trying to support Rep. Beaulier's resolution to support the Sheriff following the laws. He does not understand why this should not go forward. If they cannot come up with a proper writing of a resolution, bring it back to the Delegation and let them vote again. He believes that because of what the Commissioners have done, they have made divisions. They did not have to say or do anything, and everything was fine. The Commissioners made a point to say they are all welcome and they will use funds to support them.

Commissioner McLeod read the following resolution that was passed on June 10th by a majority vote of the Board of Commissioners.

Whereas Grafton County welcomes all people regardless of age, gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic that makes us who we are

Whereas, Grafton County has a responsibility to all its residents to keep them safe from discrimination, harassment, or from those who want to marginalize others for being different than themselves through prejudice and bigotry.

Now, therefore, be it resolved by the Grafton County Commissioners that Grafton County will welcome all to our county and that our county services, amenities, and properties are

available to all who live here and to our visitors passing through, following guidelines and policies that apply equally to all persons.

*We are committed to promoting a secure, welcoming, and safe environment.
We are committed to modeling respectful dialogue.*

Rep. Franz stated that the resolution alludes to illegals being included by stating that they will not discriminate against anyone. The last paragraph stated that all are welcome in Grafton County and all services are available to illegals, and that is what brought Rep. Beaulier's resolution. Commissioner McLeod stated that it applies to residents of Grafton County and those passing through as long as they are following the policies and guidelines. Rep. Spahr stated that this is redundant; the Commissioners and Delegates have to follow the laws. Rep. Sykes stated that there is a course of action for the full Delegation when action is presented and it gets tabled. This could be brought off the table by a vote; it is not necessary for the Executive Committee to do anything to make that action possible. Rep. Sykes noted that he is uncomfortable with the use of the word illegal. No person is illegal; they may be here illegally, but that is a very different thing from calling someone an illegal. He stated that he does not think any of them want to use that language.

Rep. Sellers stated that he understands the ruling, but noted that at the full Delegation meeting, they said the Executive Committee would discuss this resolution. He understands that the Delegation can take it back off the table, but the Executive Committee was supposed to discuss changes that can be made so they can review it at the Delegation meeting. This is brushing this under the rug. The Commissioners stirred up the hornet's nest, and they think they are representing the whole county. Rep. Sellers stated that a state representative has said they would write a resolution supporting the Sheriff and their President. It is necessary as State Representatives to show that they are following the law. Illegals in the county will not be using county funds to support them.

Rep. Stringham stated that he does not see anything in the Commissioners' resolution that says funding will be given to illegals. The concerns that have been brought up to him are that, in the process of enforcing immigration laws, civil rights have been violated. They need to follow the laws, but they also need to protect those who are following the laws. Commissioner Hedberg stated that the petition Rep. Sellers referenced was not from the Commissioners. It was a group of private citizens that sent out the petition that was then presented to the Commissioners and Sheriff. Rep. Sykes stated that the Executive Committee and Delegation have fully supported the Sheriff's department budget. They did not need to vote to do that, other than their budgetary discussions. If the Sheriff's Department is short, then the Commissioners will make the decisions needed. Commissioner McLeod noted that the Inclusivity Statement was not directly related to the ICE contract. It was brought up in the previous term and voted down. She was asked to bring it back again this term.

Courthouse Discission

Rep. Sellers thanked the Commissioners for having the informational meetings. He noted that Bristol was poorly attended, but the others were well attended. As an Executive Committee member, he does not think the project at this point is going to pass a bond vote, and part of the reason is that the people do not understand exactly what is wrong with the courthouse. He needs a list of what needs to be done and if they were to do them, which is vitally important. That would help him understand if they should repair these issues one at a time. The people on the outside do not understand what is wrong with the courthouse. He needs to see an Excel spreadsheet with the list of information that needs to be fixed and the price for each. Rep. Spahr asked if Sellers had toured the courthouse with Supt. Oakes. Rep. Sellers stated that he had not, as he has an ambulatory issue. Rep. Spahr stated that Rep. Sellers should sit with Supt. Oakes or tour the courthouse. There are issues that once you address one, it has a cascading effect. It may also cause additional costs to relocate people. Rep. Spahr stated that they have a real problem, and it needs to be addressed. Rep. Sellers stated that he agrees, but they need to see a spreadsheet if they want the Republicans to vote for this.

Rep. Sykes stated that there has been a good-faith effort to make all information available and accessible to the public. He added that it is also good to hear that there are other things the Representatives need to move the decision process along. It would be helpful to provide as many specifics as possible as to what they want to learn. He pointed out that one of the things they need to be mindful of, oftentimes times monies have not been available to do work they would have liked to do because the Executive Committee and Delegation has seen it appropriate to cut back on some of those items.

Rep. Bjelobrk stated that pursuant to her legislative request, she has gigabytes of information that has been provided. She has gone through about 75% of the information. There is more to the story, and she will provide the Executive Committee with a complete correspondence once she is done.

Rep. Oppel stated that there was a document provided called the Courthouse Facilities Review. It listed all of the issues in the courthouse that have been identified. It does not have estimates; however, as Rep. Spahr has said, it is clear to him that identifying the cost to fix any one of these problems does not take into consideration the cascading effects. There may be additional grandfathered effects that would be null and void if they start addressing certain issues. They could get the costs associated, but it would be harder to identify the cascading effects. Rep. Spahr stated that they have seen growth in the county and the need for more space. Even if they do a triage of issues, there is a need for additional space. He asked if they could add space onto the existing building, which is a disaster. Rep. Spahr stated that it does not make sense to renovate this building as it is obsolete and has significant capital issues. It is not an easy decision, but they have to do something.

Rep. Stringham added that he appreciates a lot of the work the Delegation is doing. He attended the Littleton meeting and Supt. Oakes did a great job. He heard a lot of people with building experience express concern about work done 30-40 years ago in planning to upgrade critical facilities. It is clear that Supt. Oakes us on top of all the issues. Rep. Stringham noted that he still

has concerns, one of them being that department heads have expressed concerns about the building design. He also heard several comments that the cost to build per foot seems high. Rep. Stringham stated that he is interested in seeing output from Rep. Bjelobrk's work. The state should have a much bigger responsibility for funding this project. He does not see any pockets of money to pay for this, but knows this is a concern that has been expressed.

Supt. Oakes stated that the EH Danson report is very important and each person has a responsibility to read it through. There is a lot of talk of doing the project in pieces, and he understands it, but doing work to their own home versus a commercial building is not apples to apples. He explained that if they were to try and renovate the building, as soon as you touch 50% of the building, you are into a full building code update. The sprinkler system would touch all parts of the building, then they would need to abate the asbestos. As much as they would like to do it in pieces, it is not feasible due to code requirements. He stated that the building has a lot of issues. The codes in 1970 were much different than today, but because there have been no renovations to the building, those existing codes were grandfathered in. He stated that the electrical system company went out of business for falsifying records, and many insurance companies will not cover people who have these electrical systems in place. These are large issues that cannot be addressed while the building is occupied. In looking at all of these items, there is much with this building to give what the Representatives are asking in terms of cost, he would advocate an architect to go through the building with a fine-tooth comb and build a scope of work. He stated that it would be a bigger lift to put together a scope of work to renovate the existing building versus a new building. If the county needs to go through that exercise, they still have ARPA funds available, and they can run the full course. Supt. Oakes added that they have done what they can to triage the building and keep it operational. They have done what they can to maintain it with the funds they have had available.

Rep. Sykes stated that this is an important conversation to have. One of the decision points has to be, even if it is ARPA money, do they want to delay the project for another year or more and spend more money to come to what result? He stated that if it gets them to a yes, where they can all agree on what to do, it would be money well spent. Rep. Sykes stated that he would hate to see the County spend that money when they will not be able to get to a yes. Something needs to be done, and Rep. Sykes asked the Executive Committee to weigh in as he would like to move forward in some fashion.

Rep. Sellers stated that he thinks part of what the Commissioners heard was not only the cost but the State of New Hampshire contributing their share. The State of New Hampshire built the courthouses in Hillsborough, Chichester, Merrimack, and Rochester. He stated that the state needs to chip in because he does not think the judiciary will pay \$1 million a year for rent. Rep. Sellers asked why they are building a space for the state and suggested letting the state build its own space. He asked why the county is building a Courthouse at 60,000 sq ft when they only need 30,000 sq ft to house the county. He does not think the judiciary will pay more to offset the cost, and they cannot get the state to agree to a 25-year lease. Rep. Sellers stated that even though you see on paper that the tax rate may only go up \$60 over three (3) years, people have been burned, and they are getting hit hard with school and town taxes.

Rep. Oppel stated that he shares Rep. Sellers' concerns regarding the state's participation, but unfortunately, this is not the only example of the state pushing costs onto property taxes instead of stepping up in ways they should. Rep. Oppel stated that he thinks the county should go back to the state and drive a harder bargain, saying the county is going to build a building for itself. There is no doubt in his mind that the smarter, more cost-efficient means is to build a new building. The cost of renovation creates cascading effects and exposes the county to more liability and risks at some point. He understands the delay, but he thinks spending the money to hire someone to create a scope of work might be worthwhile, and he would hope it would persuade the full Delegation to move forward with the building. Rep. Oppel stated that he would be inclined to support the idea to spend the money and have a scope of work created on costs to renovate.

Rep. Stringham stated that if they do not think it is in the taxpayers' interest to fund the courthouse, they would not have a courthouse in 5-10 years. He added that if the county is going to ask for the State to pay its share, the county needs to have a good walking-away decision. Commissioner Hedberg stated she does not know of any court to add our work to their schedule. She does not see moving to Plymouth, Lebanon, or Littleton as an easy solution. It would increase county costs in transport. She explained that Deputies would need to bring people to court and stay with them. Commissioner Hedberg stated that, having been on the building committee, if they look at the reports, it is very clear what needs to be done. If they already know that information, to then have another report to say the building is not usable, they would be losing the ARPA funds to put towards the detailed design.

Rep. Franz said that she agrees the building needs to be replaced, but stated that what would sway her vote would be the State of New Hampshire contributing or looking into whether there is a need to have the Register of Deeds in the new building. She stated that if the Register of Deeds was not in the new courthouse and they cut back on space, it would be more palatable.

CA Libby stated that there has been a lot of talk about the State of New Hampshire. She explained that if the Circuit Court were to leave the Haverhill area, it would have an impact on local Haverhill residents, as they would need to travel. She noted that if the Superior Court were to leave, it would have a direct impact on not only the Sheriff's Department but the County Attorney's Office as well. If the Superior Court is located elsewhere, the County Attorney's Office will have to get satellite offices or pay mileage for them to travel. CA Libby added that it is important to remember the state has been paying rent for the last 54 years. For the vast majority of the time, there has been no debt associated with that building, and the state has paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in rent. She asked if the county brought a renovation project forward, would they be asking the state to pay for renovations? It is the county's building, and they would be addressing it ourselves. CA Libby further stated that she thinks they have a couple of paths they can go down. The County can hire an architect and go through a renovation budget, using the money they currently have, taking into consideration all comments that have been made. Some changes could be made to the existing conceptual design to reduce the size to get to a better number than what they have. She stated that doing nothing is a terrible option, and she feels everyone agrees that something needs to happen. CA Libby stated that the goal is a much longer lease with the State of New Hampshire.

Rep. Sykes asked if the Executive Committee could be in agreement to have a more thoughtful discussion with the state. He suggested that the Executive Committee provide direction to the Commissioners that would suggest they engage the State more fully in determining a better sense of their obligation to the project. The staff and the Commissioners can also take a look at the space to see if they can reduce the size of the building and use ARPA funds for a more robust design for a better sense of cost. Rep. Bjelobrk stated that she has documentation that the Bureau of Courts said no twice to contributing costs. Rep. Sykes stated that the State of New Hampshire is not going to pay for a building they do not own.

Rep. Oppel asked if the state's reluctance is that they only have a conceptual design. CA Libby stated the state's problem is the budget. They just went through tremendous cuts and cannot commit to spending money in the future biennium.

Rep. Sellers stated that he does not want to spend more money on a design if they do not know that they are going to go down that route.

Supt. Oakes noted that the ARPA money is only available for another thirteen (13) months.

Rep. Sykes stated that he could have called a Delegation meeting to vote on a bond at any time, but he would rather call for a meeting when they have people ready to vote for a project. He noted that the longer they wait, the more it will cost.

Rep. Stringham stated that there are many legitimate issues. He is concerned about the Executive Committee meeting once every two (2) months. He suggested either meeting more often or putting together a subcommittee. Rep. Sykes stated that he does not have a problem with more meetings. Rep. Oppel stated he has no problem with additional meetings as well. His concern would be what additional information they will need by next month to have a meeting. He is all for additional meetings if they are productive and will provide them with additional information they do not have today. Rep. Sellers stated that information is going to come from the public, and he is hoping more information will come from the public, and what their concerns are. Rep. Oppel stated that he is not sure if the public is going to have more information than what the professionals do. The information the public has is the information that has been provided through these meetings.

Rep. Spahr stated that in 2021, it was decided that a renovation was more expensive than building a new courthouse. Building is more cost-effective; now the question is how to build and when to build. Rep. Sellers stated that he wants to be able to convince the people he represents that building is the correct way to go.

Rep. Sykes stated that they have heard loud and clear from the public, and he would suggest moving closer to the kind of information that Rep. Sellers' constituents are looking for. More discussion about the state lease, making sure the sizing is correct.

MOTION: Rep. Oppel moved to recommend the following three (3) items:

1. Go back to the state and engage in additional dialogue for lease terms.
2. Develop the current conceptual plan, working towards an actual design
3. Reconsidering the size and layout of the building using ARPA funds.

Rep. Franz seconded the motion.

Discussion: Rep. Sellers is concerned about using more ARPA funds that may be wasted. CA Libby stated that either way they go, money can be wasted. Commissioner Hedberg stated that the Commissioners can discuss reconvening the building committee.

Rep. Baldwin called the roll. Rep. Bjelobrck “no”, Rep. Baldwin “yes”, Rep. Bolton “yes”, Rep. Franz “yes”, Rep. Oppel “yes”, Rep. Sellers “no”, Rep. Spahr “yes”, Rep. Stringham “yes”, Rep. Sykes “yes”. With the vote being seven (7) in favor and two (2) in opposition, the motion passes.

Comments from the Delegates

1. Rep. Sellers asked about the barn Wi-Fi project and why they are spending that money. He stated that he is also hearing that they are going to put collars on the cows. He also asked why the Wi-Fi is being removed from the Register of Deeds. Rep. Bjelobrck stated that Farm Manager Libby had indicated that he is not interested in putting collars on the cows. She also stated that the Register of Deeds backup internet was \$10,000, and they were asked to relinquish that, and those monies were potentially going to be used to bring Wi-Fi to the barn.

CA Libby asked to elaborate on Rep. Bjelobrck’s answer. She explained that the Wi-Fi for the barn was approved in the FY26 budget. They have been working on getting Wi-Fi to the barn for roughly three (3) years, noting that the barn is the only building on the county campus that does not currently have Wi-Fi. CA Libby explained that when the new IT Director came on, he looked at all internet connection points and met with the Register of Deeds, who has their own primary and backup internet to service the Register of Deeds Office. After that meeting with IT Director Tetreault, it was agreed that Register Monahan would be able to utilize the county’s primary internet and backup internet in order to fulfill her needs in the office. CA Libby stated that, in that process, the agreement with Spectrum was renegotiated. Spectrum is the county’s backup internet, and the primary internet is through UNH. They were able to renegotiate with Spectrum. The county had cable backup, and the Register of Deeds Office had fiber backup. The cable backup is going away, and the fiber is going to be the backup internet for the entire county, including Deeds. It is a reduced cost from what the county was paying, and that also incorporates the equipment needed to get Wi-Fi to the barn. CA Libby stated that the way it was presented as the barn Wi-Fi project, but it is a component of a full reconfiguration of backup internet for the whole complex. It is going to cost \$300 less per year than they are currently paying.

CA Libby stated that the farm is doing a pilot program with UNH at no cost to the county to put a monitor in the cow’s stomach. There will be no collars.

2. Rep. Spahr stated that on the county's website, it states that meeting recordings are coming soon and asked when that would happen. CA Libby explained that they have gone a different direction and will be video recording the meetings and posting them to the County's YouTube page. They are currently testing out the video recording on Teams, and once that is all set, they will begin posting. She stated that the goal is to have the videos posted by the first of the year.

Public Comment

1. Register Monahan stated that since 2011, the technological, legal, and societal changes to her office have been unprecedented. She had to be ahead of the curve always, and once in a while, the curve would catch up, and that is the change in the backup internet. Now, with the collaboration with IT, they are catching up to a better place.

2. Ron Willoughby stated that there were a lot of good points made at the Littleton Courthouse Informational meeting, considering they were given very little time to speak. It is too expensive for taxpayers. He stated that it seems that some individuals, whether they worked here 20 or 35 years, wish to create a legacy for themselves so when they leave, they have a Taj Mahal, maybe with their name on it. There is no long-term rental with the state. If they decide to leave, the county then has an empty space. Any expense of this magnitude should be decided by the voters, not by the Delegation. He asked how many of the representatives have conducted polls in their districts to see how people feel. R. Willoughby stated that he has been to a few of these meetings and the opposition has been limited to one (1) or three (3) minutes to speak despite sitting there three (3) hours. He stated that he understands this meeting is for the Executive Committee and not himself, but if the opposition is silenced, then there is no opposition. If they are going to make a decision of this magnitude, they have an obligation to consult with constituents. R. Willoughby stated that, in his opinion, the whole Delegation should be required to attend at least one (1) of the hearings in Grafton County on this courthouse. There were five (5) representatives in Littleton. Comments from the public are not being heard by the full Delegation. R. Willoughby stated that the times are tough, put the courthouse aside, and inflation is still with them. In Haverhill, their assessments have doubled. To add an expense of this magnitude onto the school and the town is astronomical. The Sheriff's Department and Register of Deeds are both opposed. The state has 40% of the building, but they are not paying their share. R. Willoughby stated that it has been very difficult for opponents to express their opinions at any meeting. From what he understands, Zoom was not operational for some meetings. He stated that it seems as though there is a conspiracy to shut the opposition up. Rep. Sykes stated that he thinks that is a very pejorative term to use and is inappropriate. There is no attempt to silence anyone. The fact that they are listening to some of the things they have learned at these public meetings shows that they are listening. R. Willoughby stated that at the Littleton Informational Meeting, they were told that the presentation would take 30-40 minutes, and it took 45 minutes. The chairperson said that they would have one (1) minute to speak; however, after everyone had their minute, they would be allowed to speak again, and that did not happen. Commissioner Hedberg stated, as a point of order, that they were given three (3) minutes to speak, and it was timed.

R. Willoughby asked if any other architectural firms were consulted for this project. If there had been a capital improvement fund, maybe some of these issues could have been resolved. To wait

20-30 years and then say everything needs to be fixed does not make sense to him. The maintenance was not figured into the costs that have been presented by the people in favor of this project. Brick buildings last hundreds of years. The structure of the building should be salvageable. He hopes that they find a way to consult their constituents and get their opinions.

3. N. De Mayo stated that he sent the committee bullet points. He agrees with Mr. Willoughby and does not think he was out of line when he said there was a conspiracy. There is a deficiency in the county system, where they did not seek public input from the beginning. It was dictated to them by Supt. Oakes and the EH Danson report. The Commissioners and Delegation are at fault for not seeking public input from the beginning. He stated that he took offense to Rep. Oppel's comment when he said that they trust the professionals and there is no public expertise. He stated that many people in the county are very intelligent. Some are engineers and may have volunteered to give their opinions. N. De Mayo stated that it does not seem that there is any preventative maintenance capital reserve fund for the buildings and which would prevent a lot of problems from the start. He stated that Mr. Willoughby was given 5-10 minutes to speak, and he would like the same amount of time. N. De Mayo stated that he does not think you people respect the taxpayers, especially the people who have been there a long time. The newcomers understand what they are going through. He stated that medical rates are going up, and they have to get new plans that cost money. The salaries at Grafton County are exorbitant. He stated that looking at the faces being made when he is talking is not professional. N. De Mayo stated that R. Willoughby was correct when he said they were not given a second chance for comments at the Littleton Informational Meeting. It's very insulting what is going on; they are not the experts. Rep. Sykes stated that it has been his practice that if they have a new point to make, he will give them the opportunity to make that, but if they are rehashing the same points, he is not interested in the same points. If they have a new point that is specific to county business, not state or federal, he wants to hear that. N. De Mayo stated that they have a \$38.7 trillion debt, and most was caused by the previous administration. They are paying \$1 trillion in interest every year, and that should be taken into consideration. He thinks many things have not been taken into consideration with this courthouse. He stated that they do not care about the taxpayers in Grafton County and how they are going to pay their tax bills. N. De Mayo stated that Rep. Sykes is a bully for the way he talked to Rep. Barton and Rep. Beaulier at the beginning of the year, and he should not be the Executive Committee Chairman.

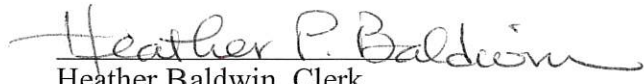
4. Emilie Smith thanked Rep. Sellers for sharing the citizens' concerns that the state has not committed to staying in Grafton County, and therefore, they need to rethink building for Grafton County. They need a long-term commitment from the state, and they should build just for Grafton County. There are too many questions for them to move forward with building a courthouse that will fall on taxpayers. E. Smith stated that the resolution that was set before the Delegation is needed because the Commissioners instructed Sheriff Myers not to follow or cooperate with ICE, and if she or her department did, they would not pass her budget. Everyone knows a way to stifle a department's actions is through their purse strings. The Sheriff and Deputies are not seeking out, nor arresting, illegals. They are cooperating with ICE as the federal law requires them to do so. If they pick someone up on a warrant that has been issued to them or come across a traffic stop and see that they have an ICE detainer, they can transport them to ICE at no additional cost to Grafton County because Rockingham County will take that person. She believes strongly that they need to pass the resolution at the next Delegation or at the next

Executive Committee meeting and tell the Commissioners to support their publicly elected Sheriff.

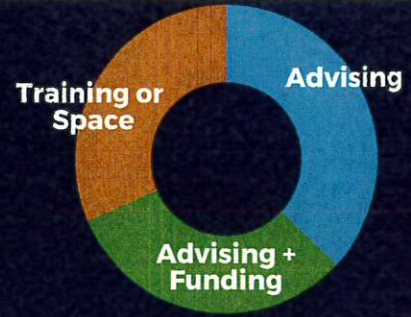
Next Meeting January 26th, 2026

12:05 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Heather Baldwin, Clerk

150+ businesses served annually



Funding Start-Up & Growth

46 Loans
to 38 businesses

\$3.4 Million
Loaned

\$12.6 Million
Leveraged

County-Wide Reach



82 direct grants totaling \$218,254

240+ jobs
created or retained

Community Initiatives



Supporting innovative solutions to the shortage of affordable housing.

Working with child care providers to launch and grow their businesses.



At Grafton Regional Development Corporation, we believe every small business has the potential to make a big impact. From restaurants and retail shops to eco-friendly manufacturers, we provide the resources, guidance, and financing that help entrepreneurs turn their vision into reality.



Kitchen 56

When longtime chef Tami Duff took over as owner of Kitchen 56 in Enfield, NH, she stepped into her dream. With a GRDC loan, Tami purchased the restaurant and launched a fresh menu blending beloved favorites with inventive new dishes—earning rave reviews. Kitchen 56 holds a 4.5-star Google rating from over 115 diners. GRDC is proud to help Tami carry on the Kitchen 56 tradition while adding her own creative flair.

One Earth Body Care

Anne Altor and Ed LaPlante run One Earth Body Care in Plymouth, NH, crafting natural self-care products. In 2024, GRDC provided advising and support for them to attend a trade show to grow wholesale sales. GRDC also connected them with Hannah Grimes Center where they won a pitch competition and got a small grant to fund new manufacturing equipment to meet growing demand. GRDC is proud to support their mission to link personal wellness with care for the planet.



Tailswag

Paige Roberts opened Tailswag in Littleton, NH, in 2021 to bring fun, high-quality pet supplies to animal lovers. Early on, she worked with GRDC for business advising and a small grant to outfit her shop with essential equipment. In 2025, Paige returned for a loan to renovate and expand her inventory. Today, Tailswag is the go-to spot for the “sweet and sassy” and their people. GRDC is proud to support Paige’s growth from startup to thriving small business.