

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

March 10, 2026

PRESENT: Commissioners McLeod – via Teams, Piper, Hedberg, County Administrator Libby, Assistant County Administrator Elsholz, and Administrative Assistant. Norcross

OTHERS: Forester Frohn, Chris O'Brien, Farm Manager Libby, Taylor Roy, Sheriff Myers – via Teams, Emilie Smith – via Teams, Laura Sokoloski – via Teams, Nick De Mayo – via Teams.

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

Commissioner McLeod participated electronically, according to RSA 91-A: 2, with the reason being that she was unable to attend the meeting in person. Electronic participation was at her request. It was noted that a roll call must be taken on all votes.

Forester Frohn and Chris O'Brien, Prescribed Fire Coordinator for NH Division of Forest and Lands.

C. O'Brien stated that he wanted to discuss why they did not conduct any burns last year and what they have planned for this year. He stated that each year they need to do an authorization to burn, and they are looking for an amendment to the existing burn plan as well.

C. O'Brien explained that last year, they were unable to conduct any burns due to the wet spring they had, and once the drought hit in July, they did not have an opportunity to burn. C. O'Brien stated that this part of the state is still in a drought. The forecast from the USDA is that the drought will persist in New Hampshire, but they have not said how long. The snow that they have seen has not had a lot of water content. He noted that just because they are in the first stage of drought in the area does not rule out the burning, but they will not initiate a burn if they do not have enough resources or worry about something happening. He stated that they will get burns done, but they are not rushing it.

C. O'Brien explained that the amendment he is looking for is because there were several areas being harvested during his initial burn plan, and he was not able to include them. This amendment adds five (5) areas to the plan.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the Burn Plan Amendment as presented. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, "yes", Commissioner Piper, "yes", Commissioner McLeod, "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to authorize ignition of this prescribed fire from today through October 31st, 2026. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, "yes", Commissioner Piper, "yes", Commissioner McLeod, "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

C. O'Brien stated that part of the grant that the University of New Hampshire received was to conduct a series of trainings. Last year, they held a basic fire class as well as an Advanced Fire Behavior course, which is required for someone to become a burn boss. He stated that this year, the Forest Rangers would be holding an Ignition Operations Class on October 21st and they would like to hold that class on the county property.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the use of county facilities for the Ignitions Operations class. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, "yes", Commissioner McLeod, "yes", Commissioner Piper, "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Farm Manager Libby arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the March 3rd meeting. Commissioner Piper had a couple of grammatical edits. Commissioner Hedberg had the following edit:

- Page 2, Under Commissioners Issues: She reworded the sentence " The County does have a request in with the Rural Health Transformation project, and that is on the agenda for tomorrow's Governor and Council meeting, so hopefully, we will know more after that meeting" to read " The County submitted a proposal with the initial request for information from the Rural Health Transformation project. This project is on the agenda for tomorrow's Governor and Council meeting, so hopefully, we will know more about the actual funding application process after that meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the minutes from March 3rd as amended. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, "yes", Commissioner McLeod, "yes", Commissioner Piper, "yes". With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

2. The Commissioners signed the check registers 1128-1129.

3. The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Superior Court Report for February.

4. Town of Haverhill Parks & Rec – Car Show – CA Libby stated that the Town of Haverhill has requested the use of the courthouse parking lot for their annual car show for the last few years, the Saturday of Memorial Day Weekend. This year, they are requesting to use the parking lot on May 23rd.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the use of the courthouse parking lot for the Town of Haverhill Parks and Recreation to hold their annual car show on May 23rd, 2026. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the

roll. Commissioner Hedberg, “yes”, Commissioner McLeod, “yes”, Commissioner Piper, “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

5. North Country Health Consortium (NCHC) & Woodsville Ambulance Opioid Proposals – CA Libby stated that NCHC has requested \$533,683.00 in Opioid Abatement Funds over three (3) years, and Woodsville Ambulance has submitted a funding request as well. She stated that both of these agencies would like to meet with the Commissioners, and she thought it made sense to have a conversation about these funds before meeting with them.

CA Libby stated that with the \$30,000 that was funded for White Horse Recovery, there are \$273,000 in Opioid Abatement Funds that are not appropriated. She explained that these funds are direct payments from the State of New Hampshire and are not regular or predictable. CA Libby stated that the county will receive more funding, but she does not know how much they will receive or when they will receive it.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she heard from Atty. Boffetti regarding these funds, and he had stated that Grafton County has received \$1.1 million in total. The Opioid Abatement Commission is working to put together an RFP process to apply for more funding, which will be discussed at the Opioid Abatement Committee Meeting on April 6th. CA Libby stated that her initial thoughts on the NCHC requests are that the county cannot commit to a multiyear agreement that is more than what is currently available in funding. She noted that there would be requests in the upcoming budget from the DoC for Opioid Abatement funding as well. She stated that the NCHC request might need to be tabled for now until the county finds out if it will receive more funding.

Commissioner McLeod stated that it might be worthwhile to meet with NCHC while they wait to hear about more funding. The Commissioners discussed the request from Woodsville Ambulance as well. Commissioner Hedberg stated that she felt the NCHC request was more than they could agree to. She stated that they would be remiss if they cut services at the DoC that they have funded with Opioid Abatement funding. She stated that they would need to look closely during the budget process at what they feel they would use these funds for. Commissioner Hedberg suggested revisiting opioid abatement requests on a regular basis to see where they stand.

Commissioner Piper stated that she wished they had put together a system like what was done with ARPA funding, a competitive application process. She explained that at this point, she would support the Woodsville Ambulance request over the NCHC request, but she would hesitate to fund anything until they see how many more applications they receive.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she would like Grafton County to apply for as much Opioid Abatement funding as possible. Commissioner Hedberg would like to apply for more funding and see what they receive. She feels they have done a good job in distributing funds throughout the county, but her concerns are the programs within their budget, and she would like to see what is needed in the upcoming budget.

Commissioner Piper stated that she would not want to fund any more requests until they hear about the RFP and come up with a system for funding that is fair for all who may want to apply.

Commissioner Piper asked about the possibility of putting out a notice for these remaining funds and seeing what they receive for applications. Commissioner McLeod stated that she does not disagree with Commissioner Piper, but they do not have enough funds to do this right now. She suggested putting out a notice to see what people would like to request funding for to help the county decide how much funding to apply for.

CA Libby noted that there is roughly \$65,000 in Opioid Abatement funding in the current budget. Commissioner Hedberg agreed with Commissioner McLeod but noted that they need to be careful to leave funds for the programs that are currently funded in the budget.

Commissioner McLeod stated that she wants to hear from these agencies but feels the Commissioners need to know how much funding their departments will be requesting through the budget as well.

CA Libby suggested that they wait to see what the RFP process looks like and then look into Commissioner Piper's idea of creating the county's own RFP process. Commissioner McLeod noted that Granite United Way is providing smaller grants of up to \$75,000 and suggested that Woodsville Ambulance look into that funding as well.

The Commissioners further discussed the Opioid Abatement Funds and agreed that they want to meet with both NCHC and Woodsville Ambulance to discuss their requests. CA Libby stated that she would invite both Woodsville Ambulance and North Country Health Consortium to meet with the Commissioners and have a further discussion. She noted that once they know what the RFP process from the state looks like, the county may very well want to solicit ideas on what funding could be used for and what the needs are.

6. CA Libby stated that next Tuesday would be a budget meeting and a regular Commissioner meeting.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Hedberg gave an update on the New Hampshire Association of Counties meeting last Friday. She stated that there was an update on the Rural Health Transformation Grant and what has transpired in the last week. It went to the Executive Council on Wednesday, and discussions on those contracts were tabled unanimously because the councilors thought there was a lack of transparency. There is a special meeting scheduled on Monday because, as they have been told, the monies were going to go to four (4) or five (5) nonprofits who would then distribute the funds from there. From her understanding, the councilors felt it took their decision-making away on where the funds would go. There will be a meeting on Monday to increase transparency. Commissioner Hedberg stated that next week, they should have more information.

Taylor Roy from North Country Council arrived for the following CDBG Public Hearings:

1st Public Hearing: Progress of the NHARDC CDBG Project:

3:00PM Commissioner Piper opened the 1st public hearing.

Commissioner Piper noted that handouts on public hearings are available to the public, including a document posted on the website before the hearings.

Commissioner Piper asked Taylor Roy to give updates about the project.

T. Roy stated that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for Economic Development Projects, up to \$500,000 for Housing Projects, up to \$500,000 for Public Facility Projects, up to \$350,000 in Emergency Funds, and up to \$25,000 per Planning Study grant. All projects must directly benefit a majority of low- and moderate-income persons. The Public Hearings will comment on the following:

The mid-grant hearing for the NH Alliance of Regional Development Corporations Business Technical Assistance grant draws to a close on June 30, 2026. The grant required a minimum of 10 jobs to be created and filled by persons of moderate income. 9 of these jobs will come from the provision of TA, while (1) additional job is required because one (1) Regional Development Corporation utilized the consultant fund to provide additional TA.

Currently, we are in the process of documenting the jobs needed to fulfil this annual grant. A full report will be provided once documentation has occurred and will include information about the types of jobs created, whether they include health insurance, the wage levels, etc., based on documentation from the RDCs.

Commissioner Piper asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commissioners or the public.

N. De Mayo asked what the cutoff was on income for low-and moderate-income recipients. T. Roy explained that there are income surveys that are completed at the end. There are four (4) categories, A through D, with A being the lowest income and D being the highest income category. She added that the income level is also based on the number of family members in the household. There are forms for each metropolitan area. T. Roy stated that, per the agreement of the grant, most of the people who benefit from this are low to moderate-income. N. De Mayo asked how long these recipients stay on the grant. T. Roy explained that these grants provide technical assistance to businesses and some of them create jobs.

3:08 PM Commissioner closed the 1st public hearing.

2nd Public Hearing: The Application for 2026 to 2027 CDBG Project

3:09 PM Commissioner Piper opened the 2nd public hearing.

Commissioner Piper noted that there are handouts about public hearings available to the public, including a document that was posted on the website before the public hearings. She then asked Taylor Roy to introduce the project.

2nd Public Hearing: The Application for 2026 to 2027 CDBG Project:

T. Roy stated that Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the NH Community Development Finance Authority. Annually, up to \$500,000 is available for economic development projects, up to \$500,000 for public facility projects, up to \$500,000 for housing projects, and up to \$350,000 for emergency activities. Up to \$100,000 is available for planning activities per planning study. All projects must directly benefit low- and moderate-income persons. The public hearings will hear public comment on the following:

This proposed Economic Development for Regional Development Corporation Business Technical Assistance (TA) application to the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is for up to \$500,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. The Business TA funds will be provided to the NH Alliance of Regional Development Corporations (NHARDC) on behalf of its nine member entities, and to the NH Small Business Development Center.

There will be two parts to the funds available to the regional development corporations (RDCs). Each of the 8 of the 9 RDCs, except BEDC, because they are not applying this year, can request up to \$19,000 in reimbursement for staff time spent providing technical assistance (TA) to businesses in their region (\$152,000 in the aggregate).

The second part of the funding will consist of a "pool" of funds for consultant services in the amount up to \$140,000. This pool is available to both the RDCs and the SBDC. As an RDC or SBDC identifies a business TA need that they cannot provide within their own staff, they may acquire the services of a consultant to provide the TA. Consultant proposals will be approved by NHCDFA on a case-by-case basis.

Providing these TA services expands the activity level of the RDCs beyond just their lending activities and increases the resources available to support small business growth. While the specific businesses and their needs can't be identified at this time (the activity won't begin until July 1, 2026) experience has shown that most of the businesses served are small, frequently located on "Main St" and can include start-ups that form the back-bone of their local economy, especially in the more rural communities served by the RDCs and SBDC. The additional funds available to the RDCs and SBDC to pay for consultants on behalf of individual businesses will allow them to offer more services, with expertise that is not available within their own staff, with the goal of moving businesses "up a notch" in their ability to expand their business and become more profitable. As businesses become more successful and profitable, they expand and hire more employees---and this is the ultimate goal of this CDBG project.

In exchange for funds to reimburse staff-provided TA, each RDC is committed to working with businesses to document the creation of at least one job, filled by a low and moderate-income (LMI) person, plus additional job creation for any TA funds requested above \$19,000. Any consultant funds utilized by the RDCs or SBDC will also create at least one LMI job per \$20,000 utilized.

North Country Council is seeking to write and administer this grant for the total combined fees of up to \$18,000, including grant writing of \$4,000 and \$14,000 for administration.

This project conforms with Grafton County's 2026 Housing and Community Development Plan's Goal #5: Strengthen employment opportunities for all residents by supporting job retention and creation efforts.

Commissioner Piper asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commissioners or the public.

Emilie Smith stated that she lives in a small rural town. There is no main street, and the businesses there are logging and farming. T. Roy explained that these grants can benefit any type of business. It does not matter how small the business or community is; they can apply for help and will get it. E. Smith stated that they have one (1) paved road in town, and the rest are dirt roads. She asked if this would apply to a home-based business. T. Roy stated that it would apply to a home-based business if they need technical assistance because the goal in the end is to help people expand and build their business. Commissioner Hedberg noted that the use of the term "main street" was an example that it would be available in the towns, but does not mean the business has to be on Main Street. E. Smith stated that this was a public hearing, and she had a hard time keeping track of the acronyms that were being used. She asked if there is a copy of this that will be distributed to the public. CA Libby noted that the handout for these public hearings has been posted on the county's website.

3:20 PM Commissioner Piper closed the 2nd public hearing.

3:20 PM Commissioner Piper opened the 3rd public hearing.

Commissioner Piper asked Taylor Roy to introduce the Residential Relocation and Assistance Plan for this project

3rd Public Hearing:

RARA Plan

This Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan is standard language that provides a procedure in cases where there is residential or business displacement due to a project using CDBG funds. It must be adopted for each CDBG project. For this project, no displacement or relocation is anticipated, but the plan must be adopted in the unlikely chance that displacement takes place.

Commissioner Piper asked if there were any questions or comments from the Commissioners or the public. There were none.

3:23 PM Commissioner Piper closed the 3rd public hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve submittal of a CDBG application on behalf of the Alliance of Regional Development Corporations and Small Business

Development Center. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, “yes”, Commissioner McLeod, “yes”, Commissioner Piper, “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan for the project. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, “yes”, Commissioner McLeod, “yes”, Commissioner Piper, “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to authorize the Chair of the County Commissioners or designee to submit the application and execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the potential CDBG contract and any amendments thereto. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, “yes”, Commissioner McLeod, “yes”, Commissioner Piper, “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

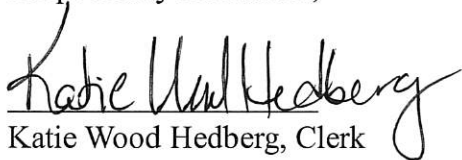
MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to have North Country Council write and administer the grant on behalf of Grafton County. Commissioner McLeod seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Hedberg, “yes”, Commissioner McLeod, “yes”, Commissioner Piper, “yes”. With the vote being three (3) in favor and none in opposition, the motion passes.

Public Comment:

N. De Mayo asked if there is an update on the self-insured healthcare option from last week. Commissioner Piper stated that there was no update today.

3:30 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

March 10, 2026

Commissioners Report

1. Milking 62 shipping 9300 – no significant change in price of milk
2. Cows – we have 10 due to calve in March
3. Pigs – we have 5 sows due any day
4. Prepping for Spring work
 - a) Cleaning bunks
 - b) Moving snow/ice
 - c) Trying to get access to the meadow to start stockpiling manure
5. Commissioner questions

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn Libby,