

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
March 3, 2026

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

OTHERS: Andre Sanders, Mariah Johnson, Angie Wheeler, Employee Council, Mark Deem, HR Director Clough, NH Administrator Labore, Register Monahan – via Teams, Nick De Mayo – via Teams, Emilie Smith – via Teams, Janice Ann Novak – via Teams, Terry Spahr – via Teams, Howard Hatch – via Teams.

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

Employee Council arrived and presented the following requests (* see attached)

Commissioner Hedberg requested some additional information from the Employee Council regarding their request for Annual Baseline Blood Draws.

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

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to allow the HR Department to be closed on May 21, 2026, for the staff to attend an all-day training. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all voted in favor.

NH Administrator Labore arrived and presented the following report (*see attached)

NHA Labore will be attending the County State Finance Committee meeting next week, and they will continue to monitor SB 663 as it moves through the process in the next few months.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner McLeod asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the February 25th meeting.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the minutes from February 25th as presented. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed the check registers 1123-1127; 2026-02.27.2026
3. Appointment of Deputy Register of Deeds – Register Monahan has requested that the Commissioners approve the appointment of Kimberli Carpenter to Deputy Register of Deeds, effective March 8, 2026. Per RSA 478:2.

MOTION: Commissioner Hedberg moved to approve the appointment of Kimberli Carpenter to Deputy Register of Deeds, effective March 8, 2026. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

4. The Commissioners signed the CDBG Close-out Certificate for the NHARDC 22-405-CDCA. This will officially close out this grant.
5. Court System Lease Renewal – Commissioner Hedberg signed the Certificate of Municipalities, giving Commissioner McLeod the authority to sign the paperwork necessary to execute the agreement. Commissioner McLeod signed the required paperwork with the State of NH for the Courts for July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2028.
6. CA Libby presented the Commissioners with the following requested Appropriation Transfers (*see attached). She answered questions from the Commissioners

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the requested Appropriation Transfers in the amount of \$83,254. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

7. CDS Application – CA Libby stated that she had followed up with Senator Shaheen’s office regarding submitting a CDS (Congressional Directed Spending) application for this year for the Courthouse project. After speaking with representatives from her office, it was decided that the Courthouse project is not far enough along in development, and it doesn’t have local approval yet, so an application this year would be premature. They did say it was a good candidate for an application next year.
8. CA Libby asked if the Commissioners would like to have the 3.03% COLA included in department requests for their budgets. They agreed that they would like to see them included.

Commissioners’ Issues:

Commissioner Hedberg stated that after last week’s meeting, she reached out to a member of the public who had made a public comment. She wanted to clarify comments made regarding EMS spending. Grafton County has not spent any money on EMS, with the exception of paying for the report that was completed by MRI. The County also is not looking at only one (1) area of the county, but it is likely that if funding is available, it would start in one area and then expand to others. 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.

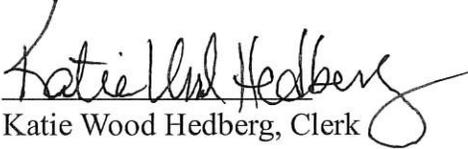
Public Comment:

1. Nick De Mayo asked if he was to understand that there would be no requirements for the COLA that was requested and no requirements for the Boomerang proposal submitted by the Employee Council? He suggested that employees should be vested.
2. Emilie Smith thanked the Commissioners for recognizing that she was able to figure her laptop out and get her microphone working this week. She had the same comment as N.

De Mayo that employees should have stayed and fulfilled any obligations they had to the County in order to be considered for any extra benefits upon returning.

10:10 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk

Dear County Commissioners
Wendy Piper, Martha McLeod, and Katie Hedberg
County Administrator Julie Libby

The Employee Council respectfully submits the following requests for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2026–2027 budget:

1. **Increase On-Call Pay** – We request an increase in on-call compensation from the current rate of \$2.50 per hour to \$3.00 per hour. This adjustment would better reflect the commitment and availability required of employees serving in on-call roles.
2. **Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)** – We propose a change to the COLA that was proposed by Julie Libby, to a four-year agreement, with a formal review and re-evaluation conducted after the third year.
3. **Boomerang Proposal** – We request consideration and discussion of the Boomerang Proposal to further support employee retention and recruitment efforts.
4. **Annual Baseline Blood Draws** – We request that the County provide annual baseline blood draw testing for employees who choose to participate. This initiative would support preventative health measures and overall employee wellness.

We appreciate your time and consideration of these requests and look forward to the opportunity to discuss them further.

Respectfully,

Employee Council Board Members
Andre Sanders
Mariah Johnson
Angela Wheeler

Good afternoon,

I am writing to share a suggestion that I have for the Commissioners regarding a policy for adopting a fact-based method to determine a COLA on an annual basis. The Teamster Union represents members of the Sheriff's Department, and they just finalized their most recent contract, in which the following language was included:

A COLA percentage increase will be applied to all base wage schedules. The COLA percentage will be the ten-year rolling average of the annual CPI-U for Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH, all indices as computed by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the US Department of Labor for November to November. The reference base is 1982-1984 equals 100 until BLS updates the reference base, at which time the parties agree to adopt the official reference base as used by the BLS. Further, these COLA percentage increases will have a floor of 2% and a cap of 4%.

This would not guarantee a COLA each year, but it would establish a method to calculate the COLA for the Commissioners and the Delegation to approve during the budget process.

This year (for July 1st) that COLA percentage based on the above language is 3.03%. I wanted to get input from you as a group before we work on finalizing it with the Commissioners.

I am happy to answer any questions that you might have, and happy to sit down with you to discuss further.

I look forward to your feedback.

Thanks,

Julie

Grafton County Administrator

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To: Grafton County Commissioners

From: Employee Council

Subject: Executive Summary – Request to Credit Returning Employees for Total Years of Service

Date: February 27, 2026

The Employee Council respectfully requests consideration of a policy revision that would allow returning employees to be credited for their total years of service, incorporating both pre-separation and post-return employment, when determining their Earned Time accrual rate.

This change would align Grafton County with evidence-based retention practices and strengthen our workforce in several important ways:

Improved Retention Through Recognition

Research consistently shows that recognizing employee service reduces turnover and increases engagement. Organizations with strong recognition programs experience significantly lower voluntary turnover, and employees who feel their service is valued demonstrate stronger long-term commitment.

Growing Trend of “Boomerang Employees”

Former employees returning to their previous employers now make up a substantial share of new hires nationally. These returnees reduce onboarding time, bring back organizational knowledge, and often return with enhanced skills and training. Crediting prior service makes Grafton County a more appealing destination for these skilled workers.

Reduction of Turnover Costs

Replacing experienced staff is costly. Retention strategies—including service recognition—save meaningful resources by reducing recruitment expenses, training time, and productivity loss. A policy that acknowledges total service is a cost-effective method of strengthening workforce stability.

Example Scenario

Under this policy, an LNA who leaves County employment to pursue a nursing degree could return to Grafton County and retain their prior years of service for Earned Time accrual purposes. This approach would reward long-term loyalty, strengthen our competitiveness in a challenging labor market, and support a sustainable pipeline of experienced, mission-driven staff.

Conclusion

Crediting returning employees for their total service is a practical, cost-effective way to enhance retention, support professional development pathways, and remain competitive as an employer of choice in our region. The Employee Council appreciates your time and consideration of this proposal and welcomes further discussion at your convenience.



By [Paige McGlaulin](#)

May 30, 2025

“Goodbyes are not forever” isn’t just a corny phrase rampant among Hallmark sympathy cards or clipart shared by your aunt on Facebook—it might also be a budding recruitment philosophy.

As HR Brew [previously reported](#), rehiring former workers, also known as boomerang employees, can be a wise recruitment strategy for employers in today’s cooling labor market. Recent data from ADP finds many employers are doing just that.

Hiring boom(erang). Boomerang employees made up [35% of new hires](#) on ADP’s payroll data for March, up from 31% recorded in March 2024 and the highest for that month tracked by ADP going back to 2018. That’s notable because it’s a period of the year that doesn’t see a lot of seasonal hiring, when there are spikes in returning workers (whether that’s a college student heading back to their summer job or a teacher returning for the school year.)

“To see that jump from last year, and it’s the highest March for boomerang hires ever, I think that’s pretty consistent with a labor market that’s very stable, but also with hiring that’s very cautious, both for employers and for workers,” Nela Richardson, ADP’s chief economist and ESG officer, told HR Brew.

Boomerang hires rose in all industries except natural resources and mining, but the information sector saw the highest increase with a staggering 68% of all new hires being returning employees. That sector, and others that saw high boomerang rates including education and finance and insurance, all rely on highly skilled and educated workers, who can be difficult to recruit, prompting employers in these fields to consider turning to ex-employees. Additionally, people are generally less likely to move to start a new job, meaning they may return to a former employer if they're in the same area.

"Mobility is at an all-time low because house prices are high, [and] the advent of hybrid and remote work's wide adoption. Workers don't have to move to where the jobs are, and in many cases they may not want to because it's so expensive," Richardson said. "For employers, if you are dealing with a very narrow skill set that's not widely dispersed, then getting that expertise in the door is going to be important."

Benefits of boomeranging. Boomerang hires can be quicker and cheaper to hire and onboard than starting fresh with new workers. That's providing a particular advantage for companies that are fixated on boosting employee engagement and productivity, and want to ensure that each new hire can make an impact as soon as possible.

"It's like the best of the new hires and the best of the existing workforce in one person," said Richardson. "They get the fresh ideas, the fresh outlook, the new experiences, and someone who's been perhaps successful in their former role."

Similarly, familiarity with former employers could lure workers back who left during the "Great Resignation" and regret it, but are cautious about finding a new job amid economic uncertainty, Richardson said. Meanwhile, retirees may look to return to work with former employers, either because of financial challenges or simply from sheer boredom.

Workers typically leave a company because of a perceived lack of career advancement opportunities, and they could be open to reuniting with a former employer once they get that experience elsewhere, according to Richardson.

"People don't leave jobs necessarily because of the job itself, but really about the barriers to career and wanting more opportunities," Richardson said. "Maybe they like the company, they may even like the pay, it's just the opportunity that's missing, and that's what they needed to go get to complete their career journey."

Grafton County Human Resources Report
 Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
 March 3, 2026

HR Activity Report (02/03/2026-03/03/2026)

- ***New Hires***

Department	#	Position(s)
Nursing Home	8 (7 FT, 1 PD)	7 FT LNA Students, 1 PD LNA

Separations

Departments	#	
Nursing Home	2 (1 FT, 1 PT)	1 FT LNA, 1 PT Dietary Aide
Sheriff's Dept	1 (1 FT)	1 FT Dispatcher

Reasons:

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

Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 FT LPN to Per Diem, 1 FT Cook to LNA Student

Active Leave of Absences February 2nd to present

Department	#	
Nursing Home – Nursing	9	(8 are intermittent, 6 for self, 3 for family)
Nursing Home – Non-Nursing	14	(12 are intermittent, 9 for family, 5 self)
County Atty's Office	4	(3 intermittent, 3 self, 1 family)
HR Department	2	(2 intermittent, 1 family, 1 self)
Department of Corrections	2	(2 intermittent, 1 family, 1 self)
Alt. Sentencing	2	(1 intermittent family, 1 intermittent self)
Maintenance	1	(1 self)
Extension	1	(1 intermittent family)
Commissioners' Office	1	(1 self)
TOTAL	36	

Scheduled to orient

Current Jobs posted/advertised

- LNA's/Unit Aides (13.95 FTE's vacant)
- RN/LPN (6.45 FTE's vacant combined)
- MNA
- Deputy Sheriff

Dispatcher
Cook FT Nursing Home
Cook PT DOC

Other Business: Meeting 3/5 to review healthcare quotes/declines, self-insured option, Office closure
May 21st to attend Employment Law Training, Benefits Fair scheduled for June 4th, LNA Class began
February 28th with full class and is scheduled to end May 23rd.

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: March 03, 2026

Current Census

Medicare: 5
NH Medicaid: 62 (11 Pending)
VT. Medicaid: 19 (1 Pending)
VA: 6
Hospice: 2
Private: 24
Total Census: 119

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: 6
Deceased Residents: 4
Discharges: 5

Other Topics:

- 1) March 11th County State Finance Mtg. To Discuss Rate Methodology
 - SB 663: Medicaid Methodology Workgroup

1	2	3	AccountDescription	Budget	RangeToDate	AccountYTD	Balance	AccountFrom	Amount
01	4100	050	LONGEVITY	\$ 8,100.00	\$ -	\$ 8,400.00	\$ (300.00)	01.4100.100	\$ 300.00
01	4100	380	POSTAGE	\$ 3,500.00	\$ -	\$ 4,830.98	\$ (1,330.98)	01.4190.560	\$ 2,000.00
01	4110	880	EQUIPMENT RENTAL	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 80.23	\$ 1,042.59	\$ (42.59)	01.4110.001	\$ 600.00
01	4112	380	POSTAGE	\$ 500.00	\$ 436.17	\$ 553.49	\$ (53.49)	01.4112.001	\$ 375.00
01	4112	700	TRAVEL EXPENSE	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 287.00	\$ 2,218.80	\$ (718.80)	01.4112.100	\$ 1,000.00
01	4140	050	LONGEVITY	\$ 2,100.00	\$ -	\$ 2,400.00	\$ (300.00)	01.4140.006	\$ 300.00
1	4145	010	WAGES IN LIEU OF HI	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	\$ (150.00)	01.4145.120	\$ 750.00
01	4145	950	VEHICLE INSURANCE	\$ 3,417.00	\$ -	\$ 3,859.02	\$ (442.02)	01.4145.930	\$ 443.00
01	6130	001	SALARIES	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,673.59	\$ (1,673.59)	01.6115.001	\$ 1,675.00
01	6130	100	SOCIAL SECURITY	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 128.02	\$ (128.02)	01.6115.001	\$ 130.00
01	6130	140	WORKERS COMP	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,009.72	\$ (1,009.72)	01.6115.001	\$ 1,010.00
01	6130	930	General LIABILITY INSURANCE	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 285.73	\$ (285.73)	01.6115.001	\$ 286.00
02	5130	010	WAGES IN LIEU OF HI	\$ 900.00	\$ 75.00	\$ 1,425.00	\$ (525.00)	02.5130.120	\$ 900.00
02	5141	010	WAGES IN LIEU OF HI	\$ -	\$ 150.00	\$ 1,050.00	\$ (1,050.00)	01.5141.010	\$ 1,800.00
02	5141	050	LONGEVITY	\$ 1,400.00	\$ -	\$ 4,300.00	\$ (2,900.00)	02.5140.050	\$ 2,900.00
02	5141	120	HEALTH INSURANCE	\$ 10,173.00	\$ 2,405.30	\$ 15,141.70	\$ (4,968.70)	02.5140.130	\$ 15,785.00
02	5160	390	SUPPLIES	\$ 12,592.00	\$ 1,609.34	\$ 12,792.36	\$ (200.36)	02.5160.100	\$ 3,000.00
02	5180	332	VETERAN RX	\$ 75,000.00	\$ 15,317.82	\$ 80,740.67	\$ (5,740.67)	02.5140.130	\$ 50,000.00

\$ 83,254.00