

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

April 30th, 2026

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

OTHERS: Nick De Mayo – via Teams

Commissioner McLeod called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM.

Employee Council Requests:

CA Libby stated that the Employee Council presented a few requests in March that needed to be discussed. They requested an increase in the on-call rate from \$2.50 an hour to \$3.00. CA Libby noted that this request has been approved in the Teamsters Union contract. The total cost to do this is roughly \$11,000 for the year and would only impact employees in the Maintenance Department and the Department of Corrections. The Employee Council stated that this adjustment would better reflect the commitment required of employees who are on call. The Commissioners discussed this and felt it was a fair request and good for morale.

Boomerang Proposal – CA Libby stated that HR Director Clough is doing some research on what other counties offer, and she will follow up with the Commissioners next week. She noted that this request has no impact on the budget.

Budget Discussion:

CA Libby reviewed the attached budget comparison sheet and a list outlining all of the changes that have been made to the budget.

CA Libby thanked the department heads who have been very responsive in reducing their budgets. The total reductions that have been made have brought them down to an 8.74% increase in the amount to be raised by taxes.

Commissioner Piper stated that decisions were made on the part of previous Boards of Commissioners and Delegations, almost unanimous by the Delegation for other spending that was felt to be worthy investments, and that has to be taken into consideration. She noted that they have also lost some of their Proshare.

Department of Corrections

CA Libby stated that Supt. Lethbridge has removed the two (2) requested officer positions, but he has stated that these positions are still very much needed and he will be asking again in the future but he was willing to keep operating as is to reduce their budget.

Nursing Home

CA Libby stated that she annualized the nursing salaries through April and sent them to the nursing home. She heard back from NHA Labore, who stated that they discussed this and agreed to use the figures that she came up with. NHA Labore also removed \$9,000 in their education and training line, removed \$8,000 for the resident Reiki program, and adjusted other various lines as well.

CA Libby stated that they asked for a six (6) month overlap position in the Environmental Services Department and have reduced that to a one (1) month position. The nursing home made a total of \$1,106,900.00 in reductions to its budget.

CA Libby stated that the rest of the departments came up with some reductions, even if they were small.

The Register of Deeds had a position in the current budget year that she has not yet hired, and put it in the next year's budget. She has agreed to hold off on that position until January of the following year.

CA Libby noted, regarding the Investigator position in the Attorney's Office that was 100% funded through the budget in the upcoming year, that there is enough remaining ARPA funding to pay half of that salary through December 31st, and she has adjusted that budget accordingly.

CA Libby stated that she adjusted the county cap, reducing it by \$69,000. She feels confident that they will be ok dropping the percentage to 5.85% from 5.9%.

Commissioner Hedberg stated that they have thanked the department heads, but wanted to thank CA Libby and her staff for all of the work she has done with the budget. She did not think that they were going to get to this point. Commissioner Piper stated that she agreed. Commissioner McLeod thanked CA Libby for all of her hard work as well.

CA Libby stated that they have made a roughly \$2.9 million reduction from where they started. CA Libby noted that they had a few increases in revenue that helped contribute as well. The increase in health insurance costs with the change in companies came to a 7.92% from the original 21%.

Commissioner McLeod stated that the original surplus number they were using was \$1.7 million, and they are now using \$1.5 million to reduce taxes. The total amount to be raised by taxes is \$33,153,316.00 or 8.74%. She stated that she would suggest that they make a motion to pass the updated budget with the addition of the on-call pay increase. CA Libby stated that she is adding that cost into the budget and will get the Commissioners the updated figures before they make their motion.

Commissioner Piper supports this budget and stated that this has been an astounding job that people have done. They are seeing the incredible increases in costs. CA Libby stated that it is important to note that there is a 5% increase in expenditures. Commissioner Hedberg stated that

she feels they did right by their employees by matching the COLA that was in the union contracts. She would like a lower percentage tax increase, but with the increased prices, that is not an option in this budget. Commissioner Piper stated that she felt it was very important to invest in the nursing staff at the DoC. They always aim to have no increase in the budget, but feel it is important for residents to understand that this increase reflects the current economy. Commissioner Hedberg stated that Commissioner Piper has always said she wants needs and not wants. She feels that this budget is what is needed. CA Libby stated that, having been through this budget as many times as she has, she does not know where else they would make cuts and noted that this is a bare bones budget. She stated that another important thing that everyone needs to remember is that although the amount raised by taxes for Grafton County is increasing 8.74%, it does not mean any one (1) resident is going to see an 8.74% increase. The equalized valuation will play into this, and there will be towns that see increases and towns that will see decreases. She stated that DRA should have equalized valuations set late May/early June. CA Libby stated that with the addition of the increase in on-call pay, the amount to be raised by taxes is 8.78%, and the total budget is \$60,536,968.00.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the updated budget figure of \$60,536,968.00 for FY27, with the amount to be raised by taxes at an 8.78% increase. Commissioner Hedberg seconded the motion, and all were in favor.

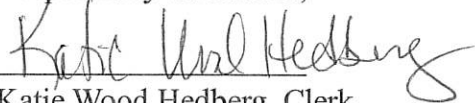
CA Libby stated that they need to set a public hearing date. The Commissioners discussed dates and agreed on May 19th at 6:00 PM.

Public Comment:

1. Nick De Mayo stated that they have done a good job on the budget and got the increase from 18.9% down to 8.78%. He congratulated everyone for their hard work and diligence in getting the Department Heads to reduce their budgets.

10:05 AM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Katie Wood Hedberg, Clerk