

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday December 1, 2009

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Ray Burton and Martha Richards, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino

OTHERS: H. Brown (briefly)

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:11 AM

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop arrived and presented her information to the Commissioners. She updated them on the NACo Dental program saying that not much more information was available but that the County was on a list to be on their "pilot" program. Director Clough said that this is not a program like the Prescription Drug program because you have to pay for services. It not an actual insurance but appears to provide a discount. HSA Bishop said that she hasn't seen the contract yet.

HSA Bishop passed out the expense by town sheet and said that the County has expended 48% toward the cap so far. Commissioner Richards asked about comparative expenses to last year according to towns and HSA Bishop said that she has not done that but certainly can.

HSA Bishop said that she is coming up on the time to put out information to the Social Service agencies for the budget and asked the Commissioners for their input and direction for FY11. She said that HHS has made it clear that they can not continue to pay the 1000 contracts that they have with agencies in the State and Commissioner Cryans replied that there needs to be some kind of balance there.

He said that there is obviously a demand for services but it is not feasible for the County to increase the amounts. He said that just as last year, the County should not take on any new agencies and should only level fund.

Commissioner Richards said that she would like to think that the taxpayers have a heart and would understand the need for services. Commissioner Cryans said that if you look at the County as a whole, the Jail, Nursing Home, Deeds etc., that these *are* all services to the people.

Director Clough addressed Commissioner Richards's statement saying that this year's budget will probably be harder to put together than last year and she didn't see how one could consider increasing the Social Services area and then tell operating Departments that they have to level fund again. She said that in her opinion this does not send a good message.

The Commissioners decided that it would be best to level fund only and that there would be no new agencies accepted.

Commissioner Cryans said that historically, the County has always seen a cost shifting from the State down to the Counties and this is of concern to him. HSA Bishop said that she feels that is what will be coming according to what she is hearing from HHS.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson arrived and reported on the County's current activity. 6 new employees have been hired

2 more will be hired on tomorrow

There is still a need for part time Correction Officers and full time Nurses.

There are two short term traveling nurses being utilized now (13 weeks)

In interviewing nurses, he has heard feedback that some of the nursing pay scales are lower than what is being offered elsewhere, particularly toward the end of the scale. He said he will need to look into this further.

Commissioner Richards asked about putting information on Facebook and HRD Simpson said he will be exploring this plus other social networking avenues after the holidays.

Commissioner Cryans asked if HRD Simpson will be reaching out to new graduates as potential candidates and he said that he intends to be proactive.

Some things that he and the HR Dept are currently working on:

- Moving personnel folders from payroll to HR
- Union Contract discussions
- Reaching out to vendors re: benefits and services.
- Meeting with other HR County colleagues
- Making sure the County is compliant on all reports and filings.
- Becoming more educated with the NH Retirement System.
- K. Clough is working toward her HR certification.
- HRD Simpson will be going to an HR Affiliate meeting next week
- HRD Simpson has joined a NH for Public Employers HR Group.

Commissioner Richards asked about the results of a survey that was sent out some time back which had a completion rate of only 16%. HRD Simpson said that he thinks that number could be improved upon. Surveys and information was discussed further.

There was a discussion as to what HR's role is when an employee is simply not happy with their job. HRD Simpson said that there are many factors that can influence that and said there could be ways to address it. Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to see an avenue in which people can voice their concerns about their job without feeling they will be penalized and would like HRD Simpson to think about that.

Nursing Home Administrator Bolander arrived with a brief report, saying that the current census was 133.

The Nursing Home is using one traveling nurse for six weeks and one per diem when needed. There will be someone coming to the Nursing Home who will be informing people on how to proceed further with their education.

Commissioner Richards asked about H1N1 in the Nursing Home and NHA Bolander said that it has mostly been a problem with staff and their children, but nothing very serious.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the minutes from November 23, 2009, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. Edits were made. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough said that she had received an email from Atty. Saffo which stated that she had found a real estate Attorney to look into the matter at the Nursing Home. The Atty. charges \$195 an hour and the estimated costs may go as high as \$3000, but they won't know for sure until the Atty. gets further into the matter. The question was; do the Commissioners want to put a cap on the amount that can be spent by this Attorney?

Commissioner Burton said that he would also like to be able to recover the Attorney's fees from the proposed sale of the property along with what is owed to the Nursing Home. Commissioner Richards agreed with that proposal. Director Clough said that had not been discussed but that she would check into it.

The Commissioners unanimously agreed that a cap of \$5000 would be put on what can be spent in legal fees by the Real Estate Attorney suggested by County Attorney Saffo.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that a letter was received from Attorney Higgins who agreed with the decision by the County that they should find an alternate Attorney for their case regarding the Retirement System. All the paperwork will be transferred over to new legal council whom Director Clough and Supt. Libby will be meeting with this Friday.

Sheriff Dutile and Director Andross arrived to discuss the Dispatch billing. Commissioner Cryans began first by saying that the Sheriff's Dept. is to be commended on their achievement of accreditation which is a unique distinction for a County. Sheriff Dutile said that it was a team effort that will pay off in the future. A plaque and certificate will be received. Commissioner Burton said that he would like to have Capt. Leavitt, Lt. Morris and the Sheriff come over when those are received so that pictures could be taken and information sent to the media. There was further discussion as to what accreditation meant, which could be a discount in their liability insurance. Sheriff Dutile said this will also include the individual Deputies.

The 2010 Dispatch fees for billing were presented. Due to the fact that Alexandria has chosen to go with another dispatch agency and that some of the towns are showing a decrease in calls, there has been a reduction in fees which has amounted to approximately \$73K. Director Andross said it's really closer to \$45K.

There was a discussion about what impact this might have on the Dispatch budget

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the 2010 Dispatch billing fees which was seconded By Commissioner Richards. All were favor.

Sheriff Dutile said that they are now getting more customers with their alarm service and that's helpful. Commissioner Richards asked if the Dept. has ever actually tried to solicit more people as Dispatch customers and the Sheriff said that it's not something they usually go after but that people come to them. He did say that they had discussed soliciting new alarm customers adding that they may not be the least expensive service but they were the best. Commissioner Richards encouraged the Dispatch center to look into getting more alarm customers.

Sheriff Dutile said that the town of Canaan used their CodeRed system recently to look for a lost 13 year old boy and calls started coming back in immediately about sightings. The boy was located within an hour. This is the same system that is now up and running at the Dispatch center.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Richards attended the UNH Advisory Board meeting where discussions included the educator staff evaluations. She met other council members and stated that she feels that Grafton County is very lucky to have the educators that it does. She said that newcomers Heather Bryant and Dave Falkenham have gotten off to good starts and bring a new spirit to UNHCE. Robin Peters will be now working out of the Boscawen area.

Commissioner Burton suggested that the Dept. of Corrections utilize local vendors as their food distributors and Director Clough said that they are using Sysco which is food distributor for institutions and there are no other local distributors that are as large-scale.

Commissioner Burton will not be at the December 8th meeting as he will be teaching a class in Errol.

Commissioner Cryans noted that there will be a Drug Court Graduation on December 9th and a GED Graduation on the 16th at 10:00. The Commissioners will also be meeting with the Littleton Selectboard on the 16th at 6:00 PM.

11:14 AM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk