

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday December 15, 2009

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

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:08 AM

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop arrived with a brief report for the Commissioners. Incentive funds were discussed and there is still no concrete decision regarding the objection to the current rules.

All the Social Service applications have been sent out to the agencies.

HSA Bishop will be meeting with R. Berner from GCSSC to discuss the reorganization of agencies.

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2009 meeting which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. An edit was made. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

The Commissioners reviewed a letter from D. Wood of AHEAD in Littleton who asked that the County be applicant for a second phase CDBG grant for the housing project in Littleton. There was a brief discussion.

Commissioner Burton moved approval of the County being an applicant for the CDBG grant for AHEAD, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Sec. Martino gave the Commissioners an update on the town taxes paid to date from a report compiled by Director Clough. There are only a handful of towns that still need to pay their taxes amounting to a little over \$9M still due. All taxes are due on the 17th of December.

Sec. Martino presented the 2010 employee holiday schedule to the Commissioners for approval. The number of holidays is the same as last year with the addition of Election Day which falls every other year. Holidays mirror those of the State. The Commissioners reviewed the holiday schedule.

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the holiday schedule which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

There will be no Commissioner meeting on the 29th of December.

The Commissioners will meet at 10:00 on the 22nd of December as opposed to 9:00.

The Executive Committee meets next Monday at 10:00, beginning their new winter hours. All three Commissioners are expected to attend.

Nursing Home Administrator Bolander arrived. She reported the census at 133 with a discharge today. NHA Bolander said there was a 24 hour bug going around and hoped that the staff would not get it.

NHA Bolander attended an Ethics Committee meeting where the decision was made to open up the vaccine for H1N1 to the elderly in nursing homes and to Corrections. She said the information would be sent out to the affiliates.

A meeting with HHS Commissioner Toumpas has been requested to discuss the Medicaid reimbursement rates. She said that some private nursing homes may be forced to close because of the reduction. Commissioner Richards asked if the aging population has been looked at closely and whether statistics have been reviewed in order to make a more informative calculation. NHA Bolander said that Commissioner Toumpas is aware, but the budget is what it is. She said that there is a push to have people put back into their communities because it won't be long before a big baby boomer situation.

There was continued discussion about the effect on the Northern tier of the state as the population ages.

Commissioner Cryans said that there's no question that some of the Counties, particularly in the North, will be feeling the results of this. He said that the pie is only so large and will only serve so many people.

The new Medicaid rate becomes effective the 1st of January.

*9:52 AM – Commissioner Richards moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of discussing consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation according to RSA 91-A:3, II (e). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Cryans called the roll. Commissioner Richards “yes”, Commissioner Burton, “yes”, Commissioner Cryans “yes”, Commissioner Cryans stated that a majority of the board voted yes and that they would now go into non-public session.

*10:00 AM– Commissioner Cryans declared the meeting back in public session and that they would seal the minutes of that session.

NHA Bolander said that the legislature needs to allocate more money for the reimbursement rates. Commissioner Richards said that she would like to have NHA Bolander come to the Executive Committee meeting and speak with them on this topic.

Commissioner Cryans suggested compiling information from S. Norton and that it could be found on a website. Commissioner Burton said that it is very important to show these facts to the Executive Legislators so that they understand what it means to the County.

Register of Deeds Bill Sharp arrived to request that the Commissioners waive bid on having books 18-25 professionally restored by Brown's River Marotti Co., which is the only company in the state that does this type of work.

Commissioner Cryans asked if RD Sharp had been pleased with the work that has been done so far by Marotti and RD Sharp replied that he was pleased with the work, their timeliness, the quality and the ease at which it is taken care of.

Commissioner Burton asked about insurance when the books leave the building and whether or not they are put in a secure container for transport. RD said that he would find out the answer to both those questions for the Commissioners.

Commissioner Richards moved to waive bid in favor of Brown's River Marotti Company to have books 18-25 professionally restored and to receive evidence of insurance covering the books once they leave the premises, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Commissioner Richards asked about how quiet it was downstairs referring to the amount of work and RD Sharp said that it was as quiet as a Maytag salesman down in Deeds but there are ongoing projects being done such as reviewing the marginal notes. He stated that there is the same volume of work even though people were working from home because the paperwork still had to be processed.

A letter was received from the town of Holderness from P. Barnum thanking the Commissioners for the role they play in getting the Dept. of Corrections work crew into the towns and referenced work that was done at the cemetery in Holderness.

The Commissioners took a quick look at a Salary and Benefit overview which Director Clough put together as a compilation of information for the Commissioners and the Executive Committee.

Human Resource Director Mike Simpson arrived while the Commissioners were reviewing the Salary and Benefit overview and said that he had compiled the information regarding longevity in comparison to what other Counties do. He said that overall, he did the comparison from a global perspective and thought that Grafton County fared very well. He did note that he has never seen a company that pays its employees for lunch.

HRD Simpson said that he doesn't often see longevity utilized except as a retention bonus for jobs that are difficult to fill. There was a brief discussion about the semantics of the word longevity. HRD Simpson said too that he thinks longevity is great because what he has seen in other companies is more steps for advancement, which the County has limited.

10:35 AM Director Clough arrived.

HRD Simpson presented his HR report to the Commissioners which he had previously emailed to them, and discussed new hires. There are no vacancies other than RN's and Corrections.

Other items included:

- HRD Simpson posted and emailed information to all employees re: Lunch and Learn seminar.
- Emailed information re: County educational assistance.
- Personnel files are still being moved from payroll to HR and should be completed by next month.
- HR is creating a mission statement
- Policy manual is still being worked and should be draft ready by the first of the year. HRD Simpson will also have a labor lawyer looking it over.
- HRD Simpson was appointed a permanent member of the NHAC Executive Committee.
- HRD Simpson will be attending his first HR affiliate meeting soon.
- HRD Simpson will be attending his first Legislative Executive Committee meeting on the 21st.

Commissioner Burton said that any educational benefits for employees should be encouraged.

With HRD Simpson and Director Clough both present, the Commissioners went back to discussing the Employee Salary and Benefit overview.

Firstly, Commissioner Cryans credited Director Clough with putting together such an extensive report. He noted that only 6% of employees have 20 years or over and approximately 2/3 of employees have less than 7 years.

Director Clough ran through the report beginning with the basic statistics and eligibility requirements for benefits.

Health insurance costs, longevity and the retirement system costs were reviewed.

Longevity paid out for 2009 was \$91K or as calculated by Commissioner Cryans, 7/10 of 1% of the budget.

Commissioner Cryans said that he is not in favor of eliminating longevity unless it is for new hires and said that he feels there is a good mix of people. He said that he feels it promotes good will and is a good benefit. Commissioner Burton agreed that it should be left as it is, and concurred that he would feel comfortable stopping it for new hires.

Commissioner Richards said she found it less favorable and questioned the possibility of putting it “on hold” and perhaps starting up again when things got better.

Director Clough said that from a morale standpoint that would be a horrible nightmare and did not think it would be a good thing to do, adding that it would create a lot of dissention.

Commissioner Cryans reiterated that he feels it’s a good benefit and that when you look at it in the whole scheme of things, it’s not a lot of money. He agreed with Director Clough that it would affect the morale of the employees and that this is not the right time to do that.

HRD Simpson agreed that to take something away that has already been given would have a terrible affect.

Commissioner Richards said that she would accept that.

Director Clough will be sending the overview to the Executive Committee which will then be discussed at the meeting.

RD Sharp returned with the proof of insurance from Marotti Co and gave a copy to the Commissioners along with a Deed that Commissioner Richards wanted to see involving an Indian Chief.

The Commissioners reviewed information that they would like assembled for the meeting in Littleton on the evening of the 16th.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton said that he had encouraged Corrections Commissioner Wrenn to send out the Corrections Annual Report to all the Counties and Correctional Facilities.

Commissioner Cryans said that Drug Court had a graduation this past Wednesday and although it was a very stormy day, the room was packed. He said that each graduate gave a heartfelt passionate talk and were very moving. It was evident from some who spoke, that drug abuse can affect many family members and not just the person taking the drugs.

There is an academy graduation at the Courthouse today at 1:00 for the Volunteers of America.

11:38 AM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk