

## GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners  
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.  
N. Haverhill, NH 03774  
Tuesday April 6, 2010

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

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:04 AM

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived with her report for the Commissioners saying that the current census was 130. There have been some discharges and losses lately but there is a waiting list of people so it shouldn't take long to bring that number up.

NHA Bolander said that NACO is working on getting a Northeast group together which will review issues that are common to the Northeast and New England with members in states as far south as Maryland. The structure is being set up now.

There was a discussion about the high volume of FMLA's and NHA Bolander stated that it is due in part to the physical requirements of the jobs at the Nursing Home taking a toll.

Commissioner Cryans asked NHA Bolander if there were any other possible revenue sources from the Nursing Home that she could come up with for the budget. She replied that all sources had been reviewed closely and there wasn't much more that could be done. She said they are trying to get more private pay residents but that's not easy to do.

Commissioner Cryans asked NHA Bolander if there was a reduction in the Dietary department because two meals are now being prepared by the Jail and not the Nursing Home. NHA Bolander said that positions are not being filled after people leave and that there are five positions that will not be filled resulting in an overall reduction of hours.

Commissioner Cryans asked if the census can be kept high and NHA Bolander said they have budgeted for 131, keeping in mind that the census has been running close to capacity for a while now. She said that Social Services keep track of those on the waiting list. She added that there has been a problem with people not paying their bills however and on this Thursday there will be a meeting of Nursing Home Administrators, the Attorney General and a representative from Medicaid to discuss the issue.

Commissioner Richards discussed the increase in the cost of meals to the Jail and NHA Bolander said that the food from the Farm costs more and that increases the cost of meals. Commissioner Richards asked for a better breakdown in the actual cost of meals. NHA Bolander said that everything has been going up including transportation, gas and the food itself.

NHA Bolander said that she looked into getting eggs from the Farm for use at the Nursing Home and regulations are very clear on the issue that unpasteurized eggs can not be used at the Nursing Home.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson arrived and began by reviewing the employee activity report, going over new hires, terminations, FMLA and those on Workman's Comp. The County is still looking to hire RN's LPN's LNA's, CO's, a Dietary and an Activity Aide, and a second shift Housekeeper. Openings include reasons such as moving away, retirement and job betterment.

- Negotiations continue with both the Employee Council and the Union.
- HR has redesigned name badges for easier reading.

After a review of different life insurance policies, HRD Simpson was able to get Anthem, which is the current holder, to match a lower priced policy which would mean there would be no reason to switch companies. HRD Simpson's recommendation is to remain with Anthem under a two year lock in rate.

HRD Simpson went over comparative health insurance plans with the Commissioners which detailed various plans. His recommendation to the Commissioners was to go with the plan from Harvard Pilgrim which has a \$10 co-pay. Increase would be between 9.19 -9.98%, which is considerably lower than the plan with the current policy holder LGC at an increased 20%.

Commissioner Richards thought that maybe the lower cost plan with a higher deductible should be looked at and both HRD Simpson and Director Clough said that plan would be a much more difficult increase for employees to handle plus, once that plan is chosen there are really no other options if things become worse next year.

Director Clough said that the increase of the recommended plan is \$215K which has already been factored into the budget.

Commissioner Burton asked how retirees would be educated on the proposed change and HRD Simpson said that there has been no actual decision made as to which retiree plan would be considered but no matter which it is, either Primex or LGC would come to the County and hold educational seminars.

Commissioner Burton asked how current retirees are instructed if they call the County with a medical questions now and HRD Simpson said that the call is triaged to find out the need and then taken from there. He said that he would make sure that the proper information was relayed to the person depending on their age and their plan.

Commissioner Burton said he wanted to be sure that there is a proper response to any question and HRD Simpson assured him there would be.

HRD Simpson reviewed the different retiree health insurance plans and said that he was not ready to make any recommendations at this time.

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes from March 23, 2010, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. Edits were made. All were in favor.

Ex Grafton County Legislator Ralph Aiken stopped into the meeting to ask the Commissioners if there was a conference room they could use to do some work on the census. They chatted a bit and Mr. Aiken was shown to a room.

County Attorney Saffo arrived and wanted to go over the Mental Health grant with the Commissioners saying that she was \$20K short in matching funds. There was a discussion about how this could be rectified.

Commissioner Cryans said that financially, the County was not in the position to make any commitment and it was his understanding that the match would all be in-kind not actual cash. As that was what was discussed from the beginning.

Commissioner Burton suggested discussing transportations with the Sheriff. Commissioner Cryans asked if the Steering Committee time could be used as a match and Atty. Saffo said she would check into that along with the time she has spent on the grant which she has not charged for either. The combination of these things could bring the numbers up to where they were needed. Atty. Saffo will redo the paperwork.

The Commissioners reviewed the DoC Superior Court Report.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that a letter was received from an ex inmate who indicated that he had been unable to retrieve his personal items after being extradited and was told that the items were not at the Jail. Director Clough spoke to Supt. Libby who said that the items were at the Jail and that he would be responding to the letter with a copy to the Commissioners.

An invitation was received to the ground breaking of the Carroll County Nursing Home on April 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM.

An invitation was received to the Grand Opening of the Cheshire County House of Correction on April 11<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM.

Commissioner Cryans signed a Highway Safety Agency grant in the amount of \$3075 to the Sheriff's Dept. which reimburses them for doing seat belt safety checks. This grant is awarded annually.

Commissioner Cryans signed the financial report for ARRA funds on behalf of the Drug Court case manager position

Commissioner Cryans initialed and signed the lease between the County and State of New Hampshire Probation/Parole for the leased space at the Courthouse.

Director Clough gave the Commissioners an update on the Jail saying that last Thursday she received notification that the Supreme Court had affirmed the Superior Court's decision and that once the ten day period to file an appeal is past, they can proceed with the bonding.

Director Clough had spoken with SMRT and HP Cummings and will be having a conference call with them this afternoon to see what is needed to move forward.

Financial Advisor D. Ranaghan has been updated regarding the bond and he indicated that interest rates may be below 4%. Director Clough and Supt. Libby are working on the tax impact numbers.

Commissioner Richards asked what the mood is like at the Jail now that they will likely be able to proceed and Director Clough replied that they were pleased but cautiously optimistic given past experiences.

Commissioner Cryans said that it is very encouraging to have this all behind now.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that she would be going out on FMLA on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April and suggested that the May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting be cancelled unless something extremely pressing was to come about. She said from that point on meetings can be worked out and she will be able to call in during those times.

The Commissioners hearing on the proposed budget will be held on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM and the Delegation vote is tentatively scheduled for June 28<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Harold Brown who asked if anyone were trained to do Director Clough's job. Commissioner Burton said that it had been discussed in the past but nothing had come from it. He said that he feels that the rest of the staff can take care of things.

Director Clough said that she will be available (though not physically) and they'll all get through it.

Commissioner Cryans said that Mr. Brown's point is valid but there isn't much that can be done about it at this point. He said he knows that everyone will pitch in.

Commissioner Burton asked that a copy of the Supreme Court decision be attached to the minutes and be added to the information in the Historical room.

Commissioner Burton asked that bidding for the Jail be far and wide and that in so far as possible, all local craftsmen and vendors be utilized.

Commissioner Burton asked that local vendors be paid in a timely manner.

#### COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Richards said that she visited a wind farm in Lempster and said that the impact in the reduction of taxes to the Town of Groton may be significant and possibly affect Rumney's rate also.

Commissioner Richards asked about County Government week and Director Clough said that nothing had been planned. Commissioner Burton said that at the very least a proclamation should be sent to the papers announcing it.

There is a Governor and Council breakfast scheduled for April 28<sup>th</sup> at Primex in Concord beginning at 8:00 AM.

The Farm sign has been installed on the property.

Commissioner Richards attended the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council annual meeting which was well attended. There was a speaker from AARP there. GCSCC faces many of the same challenges as other social service agencies.

Register of Deeds Bill Sharp stopped in which gave Commissioner Cryans a chance to ask if there was any way he might be able to increase his revenue for this coming budget. RD Sharp said that he didn't think it would be possible. Revenues have not been presented yet.

Director Clough went over the budget with the Commissioners and said that right now the County is looking at an increase of approximately 1.79% in expenses but because of reductions in

revenues this translates to an increase in taxes of 8.8%. She said that the proper numbers for health insurance have not been added in yet. Commissioner Cryans asked how much from the undesignated fund could be used to reduce taxes and Director Clough said at a minimum, \$1.5M, but numbers still need to be reviewed.

Director Clough stated that the Jail budget has created the biggest increase and then the bond/debt payments. Other budget items were briefly discussed such as merit and COLA, of which no decisions have been made at this time.

Commissioner Burton asked about the possibility of furlough days for non-essential personnel and what the cost savings might be for that. Director Clough said that she couldn't answer that and that it would have to be researched further.

Commissioner Cryans said that it is important to maintain jobs, which to him is more important than increasing pay. He said they have to be mindful of efficiency and to work on what's best for everyone.

Director Clough said that the Commissioners need to be thinking about salaries, insurance and the expenses side of the budget and that they may have to defer some of the capital expenses requests until another time.

Commissioner Burton said that he feels that they should keep the employee benefits but give no pay raises adding that people are lucky to have jobs in this market.

Commissioner Cryans will meet with Director Clough on Friday to go over some of the budget issues.

12:04 PM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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Raymond S. Burton, Clerk