

## GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners  
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.  
N. Haverhill, NH 03774  
Tuesday August 3, 2010

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

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:11 AM

Human Resource Director Simpson arrived to give his report. He began by reviewing the HR Activity Sheet and detailing vacancies that the County currently has, which include: PT Dispatchers, Extension Summer Assistant and a FT Correctional Officer for Community Corrections.

HRD Simpson discussed the transition to the new Harvard Pilgrim health plan. He said that for the most part it seemed to be going smoothly. He did explain one situation where a retiree living in Chittenden County, VT was having difficulty with coverage. The retiree had originally chosen the Harvard Pilgrim First Seniority Freedom Plan and has since found that she can not find any coverage in the area that she lives in. She can switch to the Medicare enhanced plan that the County offers, but then would be required to pay the premium of \$66.99/month. HRD Simpson would like to recommend that the retiree be allowed to switch to the Medicare Enhanced Plan and have the County pick up her premium for the remainder of this fiscal year.

Commissioner Richards asked if this retiree could get reimbursed through the First Seniority program for her expenses. HRD Simpson stated that she could but she would have to pay the up-front expense. Commissioner Richards' stated she didn't like the idea of this person having to drive a couple of hours to find a doctor that was within our network.

HRD Simpson said that he is advocating the County pick up this cost as this retiree is a causality of the plan change and it is no fault of the retiree's.

Commissioner Richards asked Executive Director Clough what she thought. She stated that this was the first time she had heard this and wasn't sure what her opinion was. She was concerned about other retirees and setting a precedent for this type of thing.

Commissioner Burton had several questions: Is there no other medical facility in the greater Burlington area that can serve this individual? Do our personnel policies allow for this? And can the budget absorb this if we were to do it. HRD Simpson replied that there is no other health care facilities in that area that accept the Harvard Pilgrim. He also felt that it was within the perimeters of the policies to do this and that the budget would absorb it because we had more people sign up for First Seniority than we had budgeted for which is less expensive.

Commissioner Richards wondered if Primex might be willing to pay. HRD Simpson said he would ask.

Commissioner Cryans stated his concern was that if we go down this road that some other circumstance will present itself later and we will have to do it again.

Commissioner Burton stated that he is not satisfied that there is not another provider that could serve her. He also stated that ED Clough is still thinking about it.

HRD Simpson said he would table it until the next meeting.

HRD Simpson reported that there has been a spike in unemployment appeals and pay-outs recently. Director Clough stated that FY 10 was the highest pay-out of unemployment benefits that she can remember.

HRD Simpson reported that there will be a Union Meeting tomorrow 08/04 and that there are twelve (12) articles that remain open.

HRD Simpson reported that the newly formed Wellness Committee had their first meeting and a Steering Committee was formed. The Steering Committee will be looking at the things the Wellness Committee can do.

HRD Simpson is updating the handbook and will have revisions to present to the Board in September.

Commissioner Burton stated that he is interested in maintaining the Woodsville site of the White Mountain Community College and was very disappointed that only 4 courses were being offered in the Fall. He stated that Representative Ladd (who was present at this time) will be attending the Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday and Commissioner Burton hoped that he would communicate the it needs to stay open and more classes need to be offered. Commissioner Burton asked HRD Simpson to advertise the availability of courses as much as possible to County employees.

Senator Deb Reynolds and Representative Rick Ladd were present to discuss this issue further with the Commissioners. There is some discussion that there will be Legislation introduced to help keep the College offering classes in Woodsville.

Commissioner Burton stated there was a short term goal to advertise and get people taking courses and a long term goal to have the Legislative/law-making branch of government do what they can do.

There was continued discussion about how the County can help promote the WMCC Woodsville Campus and the educational assistance that is offered.

Representative Ladd reiterated that he and SAU 23 Superintendent Bruce Labs would be attending the Board of Trustees meeting on Thursday and Senator Reynolds hoped that she would also be able to attend.

Senator Reynolds said that she is committed to keeping this in this area. She also commented that accessibility to broadband was very important. Another project that she and Representative Ladd are looking at is starting a high tech incubator at the Elementary School.

Senator Reynolds went on to discuss several other things with the Board: She commented on the unemployment stating that Grafton County has the lowest unemployment (at 4.8%) than any other County in the state. She discussed different initiatives to help stimulate employment and stated that is one of the reasons she supported expanded gaming. It would create jobs.

Senator Reynolds discussed the \$44.5M broadband grant that is being administered by UNH and CDFA and commented that this is for rural NH.

Senator Reynolds said that she is appreciative of Representative Ladd and all the work that he does for this area. She also stated that she is very appreciative of all that the Commissioners' do.

The \$63M State budget surplus was discussed and Senator Reynolds said that there might be some Federal claim for \$35M, but that is unknown at this time.

Commissioner Richards suggest that Senator Reynolds contact Mark Scarano regarding the incubator as Mark has been working on one in Plymouth.

Commissioner Burton stated that Senator Reynolds is known for her outreach and appreciates her taking the time to come to the Commissioners meeting. He went on to say that he has had two (2) state Commissioners' come to him and say they can not cut any more out of their budgets. It is becoming a matter of safety. He stated that as a taxpayer and a Constitutional Officer he was asking Senator Reynolds and Representative Ladd not to pass any more expenses onto the County. He stated the only place we have to go is to the taxpayers.

Representative Ladd commented that on August 12<sup>th</sup> there would be a meeting dealing with incarcerated individuals between the ages of 17 – 21 asking for the Department of Education's assistance in communicating with SAU's. These are individuals who are entitled to an education and this responsibility is falling to the County. He hopes to get DOE back in the picture.

Senator Reynolds stated that she is not going to cut anymore. She stated that she would support expanded game as a short-term resolution. She stated there will be more discussions.

Commissioner Richards stated that Senator Reynolds does an outstanding job.

NHA Bolander was now present and told Senator Reynolds that she was concerned about the Medicaid rates. Senator Reynolds said the ARRA funds have caused the rates to go down.

Senator Reynolds stated that there will be more struggles in the next biennium.

HRD Simpson said that WMCC doesn't seem too interested in continuing in Woodsville. He asked about the possibility of getting some competition from Keene State or PSU. Senator Reynolds thought it was a great idea but she is concerned with the time it would take. NHA Bolander said that she has heard from one of her employees that is pursuing a degree that if WMCC in Woodsville closes they will have to move closer to another institute to finish their education.

Senator Reynolds thanked the Board.

Commissioner Cryans pointed out that the next Drug Court graduation is November 17<sup>th</sup> and that Chief Justice Broderick is going to be the guest speaker.

NHA Bolander gave her report. The census is 131 and they have seen a dramatic decrease in skilled care referrals due to the hospitals keeping these patients longer.

She told the Commissioners that the Nursing Home is in their survey window and that Survey usually takes place in August.

NHA Bolander talked with the Commissioners about the Farm Bill resolution that was brought before the Agricultural sub-committee at the NACO conference. The Committee did not know what a County farm was. NHA Bolander stated that she focused on the educational benefits. The voted failed by one (1) vote. A minority report than had to be written. Bill Hansel who is a former President of NACO was very supportive. He and NHA Bolander wrote the majority reports. The resolution passed the full committee, but during the business portion it was asked that the resolution be pulled and presented again in March. Many who serve on this Committee are from the Mid-West and Western states with huge farms. They feel the Counties should be taking care of themselves.

NHA Bolander will get a copy of the minority report for the Commissioners. Commissioner Richards hoped that she would be able to attend the NACO Legislative conference in March as she serves on the Agricultural committee. She thanked NHA Bolander for her efforts. She stated that she would get a hold of Eric Johnston at NACO and follow-up with him.

Commissioner Burton said that he was thankful that NHA Bolander was there.

NHA Bolander stated that there was more work to be done between now and March. She also stated that a letter of thanks should be sent to Bill Hansel for his assistance with this matter.

Commissioner Burton would like to have Eric Johnston from NACO invited to the County conference in October. She said she would mention it to Betsy Miller.

Commissioner Richards told NHA Bolander that the Open Dairy Barn had been very successful and told her that the kitchen staff was most helpful and she expressed her thanks to them.

Mike King from North Country Council and Christine Walker from Upper Valley/Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission were present to ask the Commissioners for support on the Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant that all nine (9) RPC's are partnering to apply for. This will update regional plans for each region in the state. This is a nationally competitive grant program funded the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The aim is to improve regional planning efforts in our state to better integrate housing, land use and transportation decisions, and increase the capacity to improve land use planning and zoning policy. An important result will be improved competitiveness for Federal grants in the region, which are increasingly evaluated against their consistency with sustainable development policies and goals.

They have spoken with all the major State agencies and gotten them on-board. It is a \$5M application.

Commissioner Cryans asked if the whole \$5M is for planning. Ms. Walker stated that is has to be used for planning.

Mr. King commented that they have only had two (2) months to do all this work and there are still things to be worked out. But getting this grant could give NH access to \$100B in implementation funding.

Ms. Walker explained that NH's application is unique as it is the only Statewide initiative and because of the rural nature of NH.

Commissioner Cryans asked what role the Commissioners play. Ms. Walker stated a huge role and asked them for a letter of support.

Commissioner Burton stated that he hoped the DOT 10 year plan would be incorporated into this and mentioned that Mary Deppe and Nate Miller had put a lot of time and effort into developing that plan and stated they should be part of this.

Commissioner Burton moved that the Grafton County Commissioners support the Sustainable Communities Initiative Grant and that a letter of support be sent. Commissioner Richards seconded. All in favor.

Commissioners' thanked Mr. King and Ms. Walker for coming.

Human Service Director Nancy Bishop arrived with her report. She presented the Commissioners with a July expense report. Commissioner Richards asked if the total number of cases was average. HSD Bishop stated that it was low. July is usually the lowest month for numbers.

HSD Bishop stated that the Molar Express had been here last week and that everything seemed to go well. They will be back next week. She asked if the Commissioners would like to continue to offer this space to the Molar Express. It was decided that they did. Commissioner Cryans asked HSD Bishop to find out the number of people who have utilized the Molar Express here at the County.

HSD stated that she and Executive Director Clough had met with Rich Crocker last week and that he would be coming to see the Board at the end of the month to discuss the long term care process.

#### COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton moved to approve minutes from July 27, 2010 which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Commissioner Richards discussed issues from the fair with the Democratic and Republican booths. John Chamberlin was going to work with the Fair Directors to resolve the problems.

Commissioner Richards moved the following resolution: **RESOLVED:** To hereby accept the offer of the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex) to enter into its Membership Agreement as of the date of the adoption of this resolution, and to be contractually bound to all of the terms and conditions of Primex Risk management pool membership during the term of membership. The coverage provided by Primex in any year of membership shall be as then set forth in the Coverage Documents of Primex. Commissioner Burton seconded. All in favor. Commissioner Cryans signed the paperwork.

The Commissioners signed the Authorization to submit claims paperwork for the CBDG for MicroCredit. Commissioner Cryans signed the Environmental Exemption forms for the same grant.

Commissioner Richards stated that she was disgusted with how things are going with Woodsville Water and Light. They seem to want to charge us for everything. She feels there needs to be resolution to the issues that are going on. She suggested not paying invoices for things they are charging us for. Executive Director Clough explained that we are at a point where we need water on the jobsite of the construction project and if we

want the water we will have to pay the invoices associated with the observation and connection.

Commissioner Cryans is concerned but he doesn't want to do anything that would compromise the jail project. Commissioner Richards feels as though the County is being "walked all over" by Woodsville.

Commissioner Richards attended the Hebron fair where she saw Mark Coulson the Treasurer from Hebron and she asked the Executive Director to send him the tax impact information for FY 2011.

The follow-up meeting for open barn day has been re-scheduled for August 17<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioner Burton will be having a public hearing on the nomination of George Copadis- for the NH Commissioner of Labor, in the Council Chambers at the State House in Concord.

On August 11, 2010 the Governor & Council will have their meeting at the US Forestry Building in Campton followed by a tour of the Ice Arena & Welcome Center.

Commissioner Burton wants to know if it is possible within our current contract with SMRT for them to look over all the Woodsville Water & Light issues and make a verbal recommendation to the Commissioners. Executive Director Clough thought this might be a little outside the current contract.

Commissioners Burton and Cryans attending the grand opening of the Sullivan County Community Corrections building and would like a letter of appreciation sent to them.

Commissioner Richards stated that she wanted to hold a Commissioners' meeting in Holderness and was looking at October 19<sup>th</sup> – It was decided that this would be the date pursued.

Commissioner Cryans asked about the 2% cost-of-living adjustment being retro-active and if that was able to be accommodated. Director Clough said that thanks to Leslie Lackie our payroll coordinator that it was all taken care of.

Commissioner Cryans mentioned that he thought it was important for us to get back on track with the budget process next year. Commissioner Burton re-iterated that after the elections he was going to be asking for a legal opinion on the duties of the Executive Committee, Delegation and Commissioners. He felt that the Delegation was over-stepping their bounds this year.

Commissioner Burton stated that he was in support of the County having its own municipal wells. Commissioner Cryans stated that he was concerned about being in the water business. He wanted to know if any other County facility that had their own water

source had accessibility to municipal water instead. The discussion regarding water will be continued.

12:03 PM With no further business the meeting was adjourned

---

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk