

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
Tuesday November 15, 2011

PRESENT: Commissioners Cryans, Omer C. Ahern Jr. and Raymond Burton, Director Clough and Secretary Martino.

OTHERS: H. Brown

9:02 AM Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance led by IT Manager Brent Ruggles.

**IT Manager Brent Ruggles** had arrived to go over the easement paperwork from Fairpoint that Commissioner Ahern wanted cleared up. After reviewing, Commissioner Ahern said he still had a number of issues with the document and said he didn't know what attorney may have drawn the document up but felt the document was the height of corporate hubris. ITM Ruggles said he would work with Fairpoint to get the document completed as requested.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

**Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop** arrived with her report and said that both the cap and the recoveries are on target.

HSA Bishop asked the Commissioners for direction in sending out the Social Service applications for next year's budget. She asked if the Commissioners wanted to expand the process to open enrollment rather than just for agencies already receiving funding. Commissioner Ahern said the applicants should be told that it's possible that the Delegation may stop all funding of agencies and Commissioner Cryans said he didn't think that would happen nor should agencies be told that, but that they should be aware of the process that the agency must go through before funding is confirmed. Commissioner Cryans thought that agencies that were cut last time should not be sent applications as it was fairly clear that the Delegation did not see fit to fund them. Commissioner Ahern said that all agencies should have the same chance and that there be full disclosure. HSA Bishop said the process begins with the Commissioners and if the Board is not going to recommend funding then it wouldn't make sense to send those agencies applications.

Commissioner Cryans then stated that it should be opened up to all to see what happens. Open enrollment application will be advertised as in the past.

HSA Bishop said that the computer lab of Goodwill Industries is in place but off to a slow start. She said there was no interest in the first workshop and is not sure about the upcoming one. Commissioner Cryans asked if ads were placed in the papers and HSA Bishop said that she gave Goodwill the information on which papers to place ads in but

she hasn't seen any as of yet. Commissioner Ahern suggested bringing brochures to the Senior Center that will perhaps be given to children or grandchildren who may be living with them and who are out of work. He also suggested press releases and coffee and donuts. There was further discussion about how to get people involved with the benefit.

**UNHCE Educator Deb Maes** arrived to go over some projects that she was working on through UNHCE. She talked about a program called More Than Wheels which helps people to get their finances in order along with their credit so that they can qualify for a reputable vehicle. She said that both she and Heather Bryant were working together with USDA Rural Development and Regional Rural Development Centers on building economic strength for the region. Both programs were discussed.

- There is no new information on the UNH reorganization plan
- The County UNHCE staff is preparing to send out their annual report and performance evaluations which will be done at the Advisory Meeting to be held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of November.
- There have been some clarifications for the performance audit in regard to UNHCE

D. Maes had asked the Commissioners if the once a month information they were getting from the UNHCE staff was working out okay and Commissioner Ahern said he liked hearing from them as did Commissioner Burton. Commissioner Cryans agreed but said that it was also important to get the word out to the community about what it is that UNHCE has to offer to those looking for help.

Commissioner Cryans asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes. Commissioner Ahern had an edit.

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes as amending which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Director Clough gave the Board the October NACo Prescription Drug Discount Card figures saying the savings in the month of October were \$8724 which is a 30.65% savings. There were 213 users.

The grant that was submitted by the County Attorney for the Second Change Act was not selected for funding.

A letter of response was received from the Employee Council which stated that they were not in favor of choosing between two benefits as proposed by the Commissioners. Director Clough offered her recommendation which was to leave the perfect attendance as is because there is a process which the Commissioners go through every year regarding benefits and the Employees did agree that they would be willing to work through any specific issues regarding the fairness of the benefit. She said that it is her belief that longevity should be paid as per agreed upon in the policy manual.

Commissioner Burton asked if then everyone would be treated equal and Director Clough said that they would receive what was in their policy manuals though the Union will receive five dollars more for longevity per their contract.

Commissioner Burton said he is still uneasy about the perfect attendance bonus but this subject needed to get off center.

Commissioner Ahern said he didn't understand why the employees chose to use the perfect attendance as a battlefield to die on. He also said that he didn't need to be lectured by the employees via the letter and was offended. He stated that he did not want to go against the unanimous vote of the Delegation in freezing longevity but that they should leave the perfect attendance alone.

Commissioner Cryans said he was originally in favor of the perfect attendance but now hears that it is not what he thought it was. He said he feels there was a reasonable compromise in giving up perfect attendance to receive longevity and he is not comfortable with Director Clough's suggestion as to how this should be resolved. He said he was hoping there would be a compromise.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the recommendation of the Executive Director, to leave the perfect attendance as is and to pay out longevity as is stated in the policy manual, which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans.

#### DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Burton said that it needs to be made clear that the Board of Commissioners has acted responsibly and that there should be a fair negotiation when they meet with the Employees next year.

Commissioner Ahern said he feels the Board should follow the request of the Delegation but leave the perfect attendance alone, even though he doesn't agree with it, it is in the policy manual already.

Commissioner Cryans said he was disappointed that there was no compromise though he will probably vote in favor of the motion. He said that he felt that they always try to do the best for the employees over the years.

Director Clough stated that it was the action of the Executive Committee in freezing longevity which wasn't explained in detail to the full Delegation who unanimously voted on the budget. The other issue is that this decision only affected a portion of the employees since the Union employees longevity couldn't be touched. She stated that longevity is also in the policy manual and should be honored as such. She said all employees were not treated in the same manner.

Commissioner Burton said that the reason he is voting for this motion is because the employees are the ones' who make this place run.

Commissioner Ahern said that he would not want to call into question the voting decision of any member of the Delegation or why they voted the way they did. He gave the Delegates credit as a thoughtful group who review the issues before making a decision. He said that he was not at all happy in the way this whole process went down.

When the vote was taken, Commissioners Burton and Cryans were in favor and Commissioner Ahern was opposed.

The Commissioners will be participating in the Secret Santa program at the Nursing Home.

The employee Holiday Party will be held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December from 2:00 – 4:00 PM in the Activities Room at the Nursing Home.

Director Clough reviewed some information that was expressed in the management letter regarding the County audit. There is still no final audit at this time. There was discussion about various policies and procedures that needed to be put into place regarding finances and Director Clough said that she would likely have these done by the end of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Burton said his concern was that the future adjustments made in procedures or polices will not affect the timely payments to local vendors and employee reimbursements. Director Clough assured him they would not be affected.

H. Brown was recognized and asked Director Clough if signers on checking accounts such as in the Registry of Deeds or the Sheriff's Office, were bonded and she replied that they were.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that the performance audit report was given to individual Department Heads last week in draft form so that they may have the opportunity to address issues that may have been misunderstood during the interviews. She said the final draft will come to the Department Heads and the Commissioners as a whole document. There was a discussion about the suggestion of a centralized finance department and a recommendation that the Executive Director should become more of an overall supervisor of Department Heads. It was the opinion of the Executive Director that there is a need for a full time finance Director but cost wise that may not be feasible. Commissioner Burton asked if there was any proof that any State or federal law has been violated and Director Clough said no. She said there were actually very few recommendations made and what there was, have already been discussed by the Board at some time or another. She said that Mr. Sullivan commented on how cooperative everyone at the County was and the Department Heads were very receptive to the information they received. She said there was little to no information regarding compensation, benefits or positions in the audit.

Commissioner Cryans said that from the beginning he was not concerned about this audit because he has been very proud of what Grafton does as a County and said they have been aware for a while that there was a need for a finance person and feels they have been very lucky to have Director Clough and her ability to do the things she does.

Commissioner Cryans asked when the final financial audit would be ready to go to print and Director Clough replied that there had been a miscommunication regarding the single audit and she thought it should happen soon.

Commissioner Cryans asked if the other Counties have a consolidated financial department and Director Clough replied that those who have a finance director do as they oversee all the finances.

Director Clough said that NHACo has just established an Administrator/Finance Director affiliate which will help in the sharing of information.

There will be no Commissioners meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of December.

Director Clough updated the Commissioners on the Nursing Home position and said they have received ten resumes and have narrowed that down to four to interview. She discussed the process with the Commissioners.

\*11:23 AM - Commissioner Ahern then moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of discussing the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee according to RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Cryans called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”; Commissioner Burton “yes” Commissioner Cryans “yes”; Commissioner Cryans stated that a majority of the board voted yes and will now go into non-public session.

\*10:40 A1 AM– Commissioner Cryans declared the meeting back in public session

Commissioner Ahern moved to seal the minutes from the non-public session which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

#### COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton said he is reaching out to individuals regarding the old Jail and that he has asked some people to look at various projects. He asked the other Commissioners if they had any recommendations. Commissioner Cryans said that there needs to be some cost analysis to the recommendations.

Commissioner Burton said he had met with Ted Gauthier from Plymouth who runs the Plymouth Community Closet and was able to hook them up with a donation of ten 50# bags of potatoes through Sargent Webster.

Commissioners Burton and Ahern were in Easton at a meeting regarding the Northern Pass.

Commissioner Ahern said he would like the Board to direct the Farm Manager to find a suitable area where a root cellar could be erected. He said there needs to be a place for the storage of root crops.

Commissioner Burton moved that Farm Manager Don Kimball is hereby directed to find a suitable location to put a storage area for root crops somewhere on the County property, which was seconded by Commissioner Ahern.

DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Cryans said he would like to find an alternative measure and asked if there was room at the County. Commissioner Ahern said he believed there was.

When the vote was taken, all were in favor.

Commissioner Burton asked Director Clough if there had been any word from either the Snowmobile or ATV club regarding the County property and she replied that they are two different and separate requests. She said the Snowmobile club is working on their request and the ATV club has not presented one yet. Commissioner Burton asked that Director Clough get in touch with R. Derosia, President of the ATV club to find out what he's looking for.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he still has a problem with the fact that good firewood was left on the property to rot when it could have been sold. He said that he didn't realize there was wood available at the time that the Farm Manager said he was getting out of the wood business. Commissioner Ahern assumed that it would have been sold prior to that declaration. He wanted to know why that wood hadn't been worked up.

All three Commissioners attended the quarterly meeting of the Master Gardner's in Plymouth. The Commissioners made presentations to those present thanking them for all the hard work they have done on the County property.

Last Friday Commissioners Ahern and Cryans attended the 85<sup>th</sup> Corrections Academy Graduation with nine graduates. Major Cecil Smith and former Hillsborough County Superintendent James O'Mara spoke about the job and about duty. Commissioner Cryans said he was amazed at the number of staff who had come in on their day off to attend and participate in the graduation. He said it was a proud day.

Commissioner Burton said that Lebanon area Wise, Listen Center and Headrest were honored by the Governor for their service.

12:00 PM being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

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Raymond S. Burton, Clerk