

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Review of Performance Audit with the Department Heads
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
North Haverhill, NH 03774
Thursday December 1, 2011

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

OTHERS: H. Brown

Maintenance Superintendent Oakes arrived. Commissioner Cryans asked Supt. Oakes his thoughts on the performance audit. Supt. Oakes said he didn't think the audit was what he expected and that it seems to be more of a financial audit rather than something he could use as a tool for a better way of doing things. He said he did not find anything of value.

Supt. Oakes said that one of the things the auditors focused on was his system of tracking purchase orders and costs to his budget. He said that what he uses works very well for him and he can't see dismantling it in favor of something else.

Commissioner Burton said these kinds of performance audits go on all the time and he welcomes outsiders coming in to take a look at things. He said they generally amount to adding on more. He said in his opinion, Supt. Oakes runs a very tight department. Commissioner Ahern said he didn't see anything in the audit of the Maintenance Dept. that would cause him concern at this time.

Commissioner Cryans said he wanted to make sure that the Board has had a chance to go over everything with the Dept. Heads prior to the Delegation meeting on the 12th. He said he feels the County has exceptional managers and that feeling was reassured by John Sullivan of Melanson & Heath when he spoke with him. He said he feels that everything is working very well and "if it aint broke, don't fix it".

Director Clough said that she agrees with Supt. Oakes, that his system of accounting works very well and actually acts as a double check of the financial accounting.

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop arrived. She began by saying the budget figures in her portion of the performance audit were incorrect. She also said that she didn't feel that her portion of the audit provided her as Dept. Head, with anything worthwhile.

Commissioner Ahern asked if there was anything that came out of this process that would allow her to do her job more efficiently and she replied no.

The Commissioners stated that HSA Bishop does a good job and they feel lucky to have her in that position.

UNHCE Office Administrator Deb Maes arrived.. She said that there was no real value to the report and in fact had an issue with one of the paragraphs that stated that UNHCE

would hire a specialist if needed to do certain jobs. She said that is just not true. All work is done by the UNH educators in the Department and there is no outside hiring. She said this was explained to John Sullivan but did not get changed in the document.

Director Clough said that she thought that there was going to be an initial draft before the final document so that changes could be made, but that didn't happen.

Commissioner Cryans asked D. Maes if she would formally write up something which outlined the incorrect information so that he could have that for the meeting with the Delegation.

D. Maes said she didn't see any recommendations as to how to do things better and felt that if the Delegation wanted to know more about what the Departments actually do, which is what this audit provides, then it could have been presented during the budget.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson arrived. He said that his overall perception of the performance audit is that it is not complete and thought they were going to get into benefits, compensations and policy recommendations. He said those were all missing from the report. HRD Simpson went over the recommendation that were made. He said there are a number of areas that are inaccurate which makes the Department look like they're not doing what they're supposed to, when in fact these things are being done. Commissioner Cryans asked HRD Simpson to compose a letter stating the inaccuracies of the report.

Farm Manager Donnie Kimball arrived. He said he thought the performance audit was a waste of money. There was a discussion about what was written in his report. Areas of inaccuracy were noted by Director Clough.

The Commissioners recessed for lunch

The Commissioners resumed their meeting.

Register of Deeds Kelley Monahan arrived. She said that she was pleased that the auditors recognized the need for a fire suppression system. Commissioner Ahern asked if the process was useful in finding a more efficient way to work and RD Monahan said she felt that efficiency was something she worked on when she was elected to the position. She said she was not so sure that the performance audit could be looked at as a positive experience as she spent a lot of time explaining things.

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived. She said that she and the NH Financial Officer only spent about three hours with the auditors and she didn't find anything in the report that was either insightful or useful. She said she didn't feel they understood the reimbursement system. She said she would have like to see a noting of the number of private pay residents in the Nursing Home because it reflects the desire of people to come to Grafton County for Nursing Home care. Overall she said she was disappointed with the results of the audit and that she felt they just reported back the information that was given to them.

Sheriff Doug Dutile and Communications Director Tom Andross arrived. They said they didn't even receive the draft report until two days before the final was to be completed. Sheriff Dutile said the auditors spent about 45 minutes in total with the two Departments so it was brief. Inaccuracies in the report include the noting of full time Special Deputies, of which there are none. 85 PDA's in vehicles, which there are no PDA's and there are not 85 vehicles. Some other errors were reviewed. Sheriff Dutile said there was nothing to be learned from the report. CD Andross said there were high expectations of this audit but he didn't think the auditors really got it.

Executive Director Julie Clough said she would have to concur with what she has heard today from other Department Heads. She said the auditors (whether instructed or not) seemed to focus most of their attention on certain areas and particularly on the new Jail. She said that she feels that some of the recommendations for the Administration portion of the audit are large changes to the way things are currently being done and include having one central Financial Department with a Financial Director. Central purchasing was also recommended. The subject of a Financial Director has been discussed numerous times in the past with the Board and was even put into the budget once but taken out for financial reasons. Director Clough said she feels that it would be prudent of the County to have a Financial Director. There are other items that the Financial Department is working on which included policies and procedures.

Commissioner Burton said he would be interested to see what the cost would be to set up a Countywide purchasing department. He also agreed with Director Clough that there was intent with this audit to find something specific, which they didn't seem able to do. Commissioner Cryans said he would question what the benefit would be to a Countywide purchasing system and couldn't imagine there would be much. He said he didn't think now was the time to start changing management practices although maybe it was time for a CFO. He credited Director Clough for doing that job along with her own.

County Attorney Lara Saffo arrived. She said that she felt that what was reported in the audit was what she expected. They needed more staff and more space. Commissioner Burton asked how long the auditors spent in her office and she said approximately two hours or so.

Information Technology Manager Brent Ruggles arrived. He stated that he felt that the document was a brief report of what the IT Dept. does and he agreed with their recommendation that all technology related purchases go through the IT Dept. He also said that when comparisons were made, private companies should have been used as well as the Counties. He said he did not feel that the document provided any enlightenment for ways that things could be done more efficiently though. He said he was looking for a more in-depth report.

Overall the Commissioners said that though there may have been an effort to find things

that were wrong, that didn't seem to be the case. Commissioner Cryans credited the management staff for the fact that the County runs so well and felt that if nothing could be found in the report, it was likely that there just wasn't anything to be found.

The Commissioners will hear from Corrections Superintendent Libby next Tuesday at their regular meeting.

Director Clough asked the Commissioners to go into non-public session to discuss an issue.

*2:30 PM - 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 went into non-public session.

*2:42 PM- 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.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk