

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.

North Haverhill, NH 03774

January 31, 2017

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer, Piper & Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Admin Assistant S. Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: County Attorney Lara Saffo, Sheriff's Department Captain Chad Morris, Nursing Home Administrator Craig Labore, Human Resources Director Karen Clough, Department of Corrections Superintendent Tom Elliott, Farm Manager Donnie Kimball and Assistant Herdsman Brian Tillotson.

Commissioner Lauer called the meeting to order at 9:00AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Farm Manager Donnie Kimball and Assistant Herdsman Brian Tillotson arrived to discuss a bid waiver with the Commissioners.

FM Kimball explained that they are trying to get a new manure spreader for the farm. He noted that there is only one equipment dealer that sells the one that they want. Because this is a \$35,000 - \$40,000 unit FM Kimball stated that they are supposed to get bids from three (3) vendors but they cannot find three (3) that sell the one that they want, therefore they are requesting a bid waiver. He stated that Champlain Valley out of East Randolph, VT has the style that they want. He stated that they try to stay local but there are not many places that have this equipment. Commissioner Lauer asked how this cost compares to what is in his budget. FM Kimball stated that he has budgeted \$40,000. He can get this one for \$30,000 and that does not include the municipal discount. Commissioner Ahern stated that he has seen a manure spreader sitting out back with weeds growing out of it in 2012. FM Kimball stated that the farm needs two manure spreaders. The one they are getting rid of is the old spreader that sits out back and it only gets used during the spring and fall. The new one will replace the old spreader that is in need of replacement. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is reluctant to waive the bidding process in this case. He noted that he was very disappointed when he saw the manure spreader parked out back in the open weather. If it is kept under cover it will last longer and he does not like how they treat equipment. FM Kimball stated that they cover anything that can fit in the buildings or fits through the doors but they only have so much room to fit all of their equipment. Commissioner Ahern stated that in regards to the continuing farm operation, the challenge they are facing is there are too many questions being asked that make him believe people want to do away with the farm. He stated that they owe it to the tax payers to follow the bidding process.

No motion was made to waive the bid process. FM Kimball will send it out to bid.

Commissioner Piper stated that she had emailed Commissioner Lauer about sticking to the agenda as they were way over on time last week. She stated that she wondered if they have a situation that comes up where they were to go over on time if they could schedule another meeting to discuss that issue perhaps on a Thursday. She stated that if they have questions that

are not urgent questions, if they can be discussed at another meeting that week because she cannot stay all day due to her teaching commitments and she does not want to miss any valuable information. Commissioner Lauer stated that they will make an effort to stay on schedule as best they can.

Commissioner Lauer asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the January 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Ahern had several edits.

Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes as amended. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor.

HR Director Clough arrived to discuss a comprehensive wage chart study that was done at Grafton County. She explained that back in the early summer the prior HR Director and herself had determined that it would be a good idea to look at the wage charts as they had not been looked at in a long time. They were approved to do a comprehensive wage chart study and hired Human Resources Partners out of Maine to complete this study. This is the company that designed the original wage chart. They have been in place since around 2002. They have not had a thorough look taken at them since then. As a result of this study there were some recommendations made by Human Resources Partners. She summarized the wage study and its recommendations as follows:

Don Tyler of Human Resource Partners, LLC recently completed a comprehensive wage study for Grafton County. This study included both a market analysis and position evaluations for Grafton County's salary structures.

As a part of the market analysis, salary information was gathered from 5 private employers, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Hospital and Healthcare Compensation Services, 2015 NH Counties Survey – focusing on Data from Belknap, Cheshire, Carroll, Coos and Sullivan counties, NH Hospital Association Salary Survey, Robert Half 2017 Salary Trends and Compensation (National Data) and the State of NH, State of VT and Thornton & Associates Northern New England Benchmark Wage and Benefit Survey. Overall, the County minimums led the market by an average of .7% and the maximums trailed the market by an average of 1.4%. The County's actual pay trailed the market by an average of 2%.

As a result of the market analysis the consultant's recommendation is consideration of a salary structure adjustment in the 2.5% to 3.0% range to ensure the structures remain competitive throughout 2017. We also had 2 particular grades that were well below market in the maximum and minimum range and as such he has recommended adjustments to these 2 labor grades. The first is Grade 11 on the Executive wage scale. This labor grade includes 2 positions. This labor grade was 12% below market in the salary range offered for those 2 positions. The recommended changes will allow for greater growth opportunity for these 2 highly market driven positions. The other recommended adjustment is Grade 5 on the Executive wage scale. There are 14 positions in this labor grade with the range trailing the market by an average of 5%, some positions much lower than others. He is recommending a 5% range adjustment to this labor grade. Again, this will allow our range to be within market and offer a larger range for growth opportunity.

As part of the position evaluation, the consultant was given a copy of every positions job description. The purpose of the position evaluation program is to develop a clear understanding of each different position in the organization, to ensure that each position is measured on the same basis to determine its relative value, and to ensure that each individual position is equitably and competitively compensated for the type of work performed.

The position evaluation plan has been constructed to serve as a guide for us. The plan utilizes eight factors or “yardsticks” as the basis of measurements. Position evaluation is an objective method of making judgements concerning relative value of positions within the organization. While it is impossible to eliminate all subjectivity in making these determinations, it is important to remember that the position, not the employee, is being evaluated.

As a result of the position evaluations, for the most part, positions were properly aligned with the labor grade which they are currently placed in. There were 9 positions that the consultant has recommended an upgrade for as a result of the position evaluation overall point total. These positions are as follows: Alternative Sentencing Director, Sheriff’s Office Civil Secretary, Alternative Sentencing Administrative Assistant, County Attorney’s Office Legal Assistant and Victim Witness Clerk, Alternative Sentencing Case Manager, Conservation District Office Administrator, County Attorney’s Office Assistant Office Administrator and Nursing Home Social Service Assistant. The upgrades for the Social Services Assistant and the Assistant Office Administrator for the County Attorney’s Office were approved in the current budget contingent upon results of this wage study. As such, these upgrades have been applied to the positions. The remaining positions recommended for upgrades have been communicated to the department heads in order to include in their FY 18 budget requests.

I would ask that the Commissioners give proper consideration to the salary structure adjustment in the 2.5% - 3% range. I would also ask for your approval, effective, July 1, 2017, for range adjustments to Grade 11 and Grade 5 on the Executive, Non-bargaining, Wage scale and the recommended position upgrades, as a result of this comprehensive wage study.

As you know, our geographical location can at times, make it difficult to recruit and retain the staff we need. Unemployment rates are low, with NH having an unemployment rate of 2.5%. This is the lowest compared to all New England states. As one of the largest employers in this area, it is of utmost importance that our wages remain competitive in order to retain our current staff and allow us the ability to recruit the staff we need.

HR Director Clough answered various questions from the Commissioners and the Commissioners requested more time to review this information before they make any decisions.

The Commissioners signed check registers 50; 1124-1128.

County Administrator Libby reviewed the National Association of Counties (NACO) Prescription Drug Report for the month of December. There was a total price savings of \$2,087.52 or 28.84% and \$780,614.83.00 has been saved since the inception of the program in September, 2006.

NH Association of Counties – Executive Committee Nominations – CA Libby stated that the Executive Committee is made up of five (5) officials from each county in the state. Currently Grafton County has four (4) members; Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop, DoC Superintendent Tom Elliott, Nursing Home Administrator Craig Labore and County Administrator Julie Libby. She stated that the Commissioners need to nominate a 5<sup>th</sup> member. They typically meet once a month, the first Friday, at Primex or Merrimack County. The Commissioners discussed which one of them would serve on the committee.

Commissioner Ahern nominated Commissioner Piper to serve on the Executive Committee. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived to discuss the washing machine issue in the Nursing Home. He handed out a quote he received to fix their current 130lb washer. The quote to repair the current washer is \$16,536.99. NHA Labore explained that the machine is about twenty – one (21) years old; they do not know if there is damage to the shaft that the drum sits on and if there is that quote to fix it would increase. He noted that he was planning to replace this washer in the next fiscal year in his capital budget.

NHA Labore then stated that he solicited a quote for a brand new washer. He handed out the quote to the Commissioners and stated that the cost for a new washer is \$20,510.00. This is for a 105lb washer. He explained that by dropping down in size, the hope is in this coming year's budget to purchase a 45 lb. washer. When there are new admissions or contact precautions they use the large washers to wash their laundry. They are washing 20 or 30 lbs. of laundry in their 100 lb. washers and it creates a lot of wear and tear on the washer. He also noted that he is waiting on another quote for the new washer. He stated that he is looking for authorization to spend up to \$20,510.00. If the new quote comes in lower they will go with that price.

Commissioner Ahern moved to authorize NHA Labore to spend up to \$20,510.00 on the purchase of a new washer. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

\*10:12 AM - Commissioner Piper 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 Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes”; Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\*10:28 AM Commissioner Lauer declared the meeting back in public session.

Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session in that they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion

Commissioner Ahern asked Supt. Elliott how many washers are in the Department of Corrections. Supt. Elliott stated that he has two (2) washers and two (2) dryers and he would get back to Commissioner Ahern on the size of them. He stated that they are in use seven (7) days a week usually two (2) shifts a day.

\*10:37 AM - Commissioner Piper moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with anybody or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph according to RSA 91-A:3, II (e). Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Ahern "yes"; Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\*10:41 AM Commissioner Lauer declared the meeting back in public session.

Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session in that they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

County Attorney Saffo arrived and had stated that she was asked to look into rules on 91-A non-public minutes. She stated that she was in Concord and went to the Attorney General's office. She was told that they could not give the county legal advice and recommended the county to contact their civil attorney. The Attorney General's Office stated that the only advice they could give was from the Right to Know memo which is published online. The issue is how to revisit old decisions to reopen minutes that have been sealed. CA Saffo stated that the memo is not entirely clear on that process. She stated that meetings are sealed for only as long as they need to be. Reopening minutes needs to be voted on. There is a difference between opening minutes to decide whether you want to unseal versus reopening them and making them public again. They might vote to reopen minutes to decide whether they need to be unsealed or not but if that it is done that information is confidential until a decision is made to make it public again.

CA Saffo stated that she needs signatures for the appointments of the Assistant County Attorneys. She explained that this is a matter of practice to do the reappointment the attorneys every two (2) years with new Boards of Commissioners.

CA Saffo then handed out a price breakdown of the Sheriff Deputy position that would be funded by a grant that the Attorney General's Office will be applying for. She explained that the only part in the grant that raises an issue is the need to purchase a cruiser as it is not covered by the grant. She stated that she can ask for partial mileage at \$6k a year or a total of \$18,000 to help offset the cost of the cruiser. Captain Morris was in attendance for the discussion and stated

that the Sheriff's Department has a spare car but it is used by a special deputy each day. Commissioner Lauer asked if it was possible to instead of selling an old cruiser this year, keeping it for this grant funded employee. She asked CA Saffo if she thinks they have a chance of getting mileage. CA Saffo stated that she is comfortable going back and asking for \$6,000 a year in mileage. She stated that they will apply for the grant knowing that they are responsible for the cruiser and will have to figure out the details as it is not a budgeted item. There was a discussion regarding them leasing a car but it was stated it is too expensive due to all the mileage they will put on the car. She will give the AG's office the breakdown of leasing versus purchasing a car and explain why leasing will not work for them.

11:09 AM Commissioner Ahern moved to temporarily adjourn this meeting for the purpose of consulting legal counsel. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor. Commissioner Lauer stated that they will now adjourn this public meeting for the purpose of consulting with legal counsel. The public must leave the meeting room and the door will be closed.

11:34 AM Commissioner Lauer reconvened the meeting.

#### Commissioner Issues:

Commissioner Ahern stated that he attended the UNH Extension Advisory Council meeting last night and was invited to a meeting on Veterans and Agriculture. He stated that in conjunction with the food situation at the facility, he would like to know if it was possible to get a total amount of dairy products that are used per month: milk, ice cream, yogurt. CA Libby stated that she would look into it. Commissioner Ahern noted that he received a copy of the proposed NHAC budget narrative.

Commissioner Piper stated that she was excited to hear about what Nancy Bishop had told them about the Imagine Care Pilot Project. She had met with Roberta Berner and they said they had four (4) clients set to participate in the pilot. She then shared that she had heard over the weekend that DHMC was cancelling Imagine Care and she confirmed that with Human Services Administrator Bishop yesterday.

Commissioner Lauer stated that all three (3) Commissioners attended the UNH Cooperative Extension Advisory meeting. She then asked CA Libby if Piermont paid their outstanding interest bill. CA Libby stated that they have.

HRD Clough arrived to discuss Grafton County's Broker of Record. She requested to go into nonpublic session.

\* 11:41 AM – Commissioner Ahern moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the public body itself, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine, or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant according to RSA 91-A:3, II (c) . Commissioner Piper

seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes”; Commissioner Piper “yes”; Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted yes and would now go into non-public session.

\* 11:53 AM Commissioner declared the meeting back in public session.

Commissioner Ahern moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session in that they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Ahern moved that Grafton County effective February 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 will appoint New England Employee Benefits Company Inc. as the county’s Insurance Broker of Record. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

11:54AM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Wendy A. Piper, Clerk