

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Highway

North Haverhill, NH 03774

October 31, 2017

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer, Piper and Ahern. County Administrator Libby.

OTHERS PRESENT: County Attorney Lara Saffo, Patricia Garvin CDBG Consultant, Kelley Monahan, Register of Deeds, Steven Schneider, Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC, Dr. Barbara Robinson, North Country Council, Jeff Hayes, Lakes Region RPC, Alternative Sentencing Director Bill Gilding and Coos County Commissioner Rick Samson.

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

County Attorney Lara Saffo arrived and requested to adjourn the meeting to consult with legal counsel.

9:05 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.

*9:20 AM Commissioner Lauer reconvened the meeting.

Coos Commissioner Rick Samson was present at the meeting to discuss Northern Pass with the Commissioners. Commissioner Samson thanked the Commissioners for allowing County Attorney Saffo to do what she is doing in regards to representing the Commissioners as intervenors. He stated that she is doing an excellent job. He explained that he was attending the Commissioners meeting to ask them to sign a petition that has been started to ask Yale University to prevent Northern Pass from crossing Yale-owned land in Coos County. Yale University owns 125,000 acres in Millsfield. Yale University is 98.8% owner of Bayroot, LLC, which has leased 24 miles of the proposed route to the developers. If the project is approved, Yale will receive \$100M and then additionally \$1/\$2M per year.

The petition already has over 400 signatures and Commissioner Samson would like the Commissioners to consider joining this effort and signing the petition. He showed the Commissioners some maps of the property to show the clear cutting that has taken place in 2015 and 2016. He stated that he would leave the petition with the Commissioners along with the information where to submit if they would like to sign.

Commissioner Samson again reiterated what a fantastic job County Attorney Lara Saffo was doing and thanked the Commissioners for their time.

9:35 AM Open the 1st Public Hearing: the CDBG Project:

Chairman Lauer asked Pat Garvin to introduce the project and noted that there are handouts about public hearings available to the public

Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects and feasibility studies that primarily benefit low and moderate income persons. Grafton County is eligible for up to \$500,000 a year for public facility/housing rehabilitation, up to \$500,000 a year for economic development projects (including business technical assistance projects), as well as up to \$500,000 a year in emergency funds. Feasibility Study funds are available for up to \$12,000 per year. Projects must primarily benefit persons of low to moderate income.

This proposed Economic Development for Regional Development Corporation Business Technical Assistance (TA) application to the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is for up to \$300,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds for the 2017 program year. The 2017 program year is the calendar year Jan-Dec, 2017 for which HUD has allocated CDBG funds to the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), and for which the CDFFA has the authority to approve grants submitted between Jan. 1 and Dec. 31, 2017. The Business TA funds will be provided to the NH Alliance of Regional Development Corporations (NHARDC) on behalf of its 10 member entities.

There will be two parts to the funds available to the regional development corporations (RDCs). Each of the 10 RDCs can request up to \$19,000 in reimbursement for staff time spent providing technical assistance (TA) to businesses in their region (\$190,000 in the aggregate).

The second part of the funding will consist of a "pool" of funds in the amount of \$95,000. As an RDC identifies a business TA need that they cannot provide within their own staff they may acquire the services of a consultant to provide the TA. Consultant proposals will be approved by NHCDFFA on a case-by-case basis. This is a new activity that can be considered a pilot part of this project.

Providing these TA services expands the activity level of the RDCs beyond just their lending activities. While the specific businesses and their needs can't be identified at this time (the activity won't begin until July 1, 2018) past experience has shown that most of the businesses served are small, frequently located on "Main St" and can include start-ups that form the backbone of their local economy, especially in the more rural communities served by the RDCs. The additional funds available to the RDCs to pay for consultants on behalf of individual businesses will allow the RDCs to offer more services, with expertise that is not available within their own staff, with the goal of moving businesses "up a notch" in their ability to expand their business and become more profitable. As businesses become more successful and profitable, they expand and hire more employees---and this is the ultimate goal of this CDBG project.

In exchange for funds to reimburse for staff-provided TA each RDC is committed to working with businesses to document the creation of at least one full time job, filled by a low and moderate income (LMI) person. Alternatively, they can work exclusively with businesses in LMI areas (as defined by HUD) which provide goods and services in those LMI areas.

The County will retain up to \$15,000 for the expenses related to the administration of this grant.

This project conforms with the County's current 2015 Housing and Community Development Plan's goal of supporting economic and community development projects of regional, and statewide, impact through application of CDBG funds through CDFA.

Commissioner Lauer asked for public comments.

Commissioner Ahern referenced the Representation Letter from the FY 2017 audit and asked P. Garvin if any issues have arisen with any of the CDBG grants. She stated that she could only speak to grants that she administers and that there were not any issues. Every aspect was in compliance. She stated that CDFA has pretty rigorous contracts that are signed off on and that all requirements are met.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he had reviewed the Representation Letter and had concerns with some of the contents of the letter. He stated that he would reserve any further comments at this time. He feels that it is important for him to ask questions regarding CDBG grants since that letter make representations for him.

Register of Deeds Kelley Monahan asked if all ten (10) RDC's receive money from this grant, why is Grafton County the applicant? P. Garvin stated that Grafton has been gracious enough when asked if they would sponsor it, to agree to. The County has done it for many years. P. Garvin stated if the County would like to not do it in the future, the Alliance would ask another County to be the sponsor.

RD Monahan asked with NH having such a low unemployment rate is this really needed. P. Garvin stated that the RDC's generally help businesses that cannot get full funding from a bank. They are not serving big business these are small businesses that are benefitting from these funds. She stated that rural NH, especially, is not attracting big employers and that in order to survive many people are starting their own businesses. Most of these are really small businesses that have technical assistance needs and this program really helps those individuals.

RD Monahan stated that this seems to be redundant to what the Small Business Development Center does. P. Garvin stated that is it not redundant; it is in addition to what the Small Business Development Center does, and they work in partnership with one another.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he is concerned that if the federal funding for this goes away that the County will be in a position to have to pick this up. He is not in support of that. Commissioner Lauer explained that for CDBG grants, the County acts as a pass through and that we are not obligated to fund anything that we don't receive funds for under these projects.

Commissioner Piper stated that she has not read anything in her research that states that the County would be obligated. P. Garvin stated that the contract with CDFA states that will not happen. The County would not be liable if federal funding wasn't available.

9:53 AM – Commissioner Lauer closed the public hearing.

9:53 AM – Commissioner Lauer opened the 2nd Public Hearing and asked Pat Garvin to introduce the Residential Relocation and Assistance Plan for this project.

RARA Plan

This Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Assistance Plan is standard language which provides a procedure in cases where there is residential or business displacement due to a project using CDBG funds. It must be adopted for each CDBG project. For this project, no displacement or relocation is anticipated but the plan must be adopted in the unlikely chance that displacement takes place.

Commissioner Lauer asked for questions and/or public comment. There was none.

9:54 AM – Commissioner Lauer closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve submittal of a CDBG application on behalf of the Alliance of Regional Development Corporations; Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. All in favor.

Commissioner Piper moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan for the project; Commissioner Ahern seconded. All in favor.

Commissioner Ahern moved to authorize the Chair of the County Commissioners to submit the application and execute any and all documents necessary to effectuate the potential CDBG contract; Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. All in favor.

Commissioner Piper moved to have Patricia Garvin write the application on behalf of the County; Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion. All in favor.

The Executive Directors from the three (3) Regional Planning Commissions that represent communities in Grafton County arrived to meet with the Commissioners. Steve Schneider from Upper Valley Lake Sunapee RPC, Dr. Barbara Robinson from North Country Council and Jeff Hayes from Lakes Region RPC. Each of the Executive Directors introduced themselves and gave the Commissioners their background. S. Schneider said that he is a relatively new RPC Executive Director and he thought it made sense to reach out to the Commissioners and see if there are ways in which the County and the RPC's can work collaboratively.

Dr. Robinson reviewed the primary functions of the North Country Council, which represents a majority of the Grafton County communities. She reviewed some of their major priorities currently which include broadband, which NCC feels is vital to the area in order to thrive. They

work with DoT to manage the transportation planning in the area. They work with each of their communities to provide master planning, capital improvement planning, etc. She also stated that they are currently working with Coos County regarding the Trails program. She offered that this might be something that is also interesting to Grafton County once their study is complete.

J. Hayes stated the Lakes Region RPC represents six (6) communities in Grafton County. He stated that they do many of the same things that NCC does but some of the priorities for LR RPC currently are working on cooperative procurement or group purchasing. He stated that he had just worked with 18 communities and 6 school districts on an electricity cooperative and saved significant money for those entities. He stated that RPC's are thinking about the future. He stated everyone wants to save money. The RPC's were set up to help communities.

Dr. Robinson stated that another topic that might be able to have some collaboration with the County is solid waste issues. She stated that they work closely with DES and are helping towns with this issue. She stated that this is going to need to be looked at regionally. She feels that this is an opportunity for strategic planning to deal with solid waste issues. J. Hayes stated that this might be an area for group purchasing even if a number of communities just put their bids for hauling out at the same time.

S. Schneider stated that there are real opportunities for cooperation. He went onto to discuss Workforce Development and housing issues. He discussed the Housing Needs Assessment that RPC's are required to do every five (5) years and perhaps doing it at the County level would be beneficial. He stated that he would be following up on this in the future with the Commissioners.

Commissioner Piper thanked the group for educating her. She stated that as a new Commissioner, this discussion was very helpful. She told the group that she appreciated all that they do.

J. Hayes stated that RSA 36 is the enabling legislation for Regional Planning Commissions. They are a political subdivision of the state and their governing bodies are comprised of local communities.

Commissioner Lauer asked the group what the primary source of funding is for RPC's. They stated that about 1/3 of their funding comes from dues and their contracts with DoT. The rest they have to find. They work with communities and state and federal agencies. J. Hayes stated that they are probably a little too dependent on federal funding. He stated that the best way to serve the region is through collaboration.

Commissioner Ahern had several comments for the group. He first asked if the Charlestown Economic Development Association is still active. S. Schneider stated that he does not believe that it is. Commissioner Ahern stated that a couple of things he believes that the RPC's should be looking into are Northern Pass and Biodiesel. He also mentioned Livermore Falls. In regards to regional efforts he thought that the RPC's might look at Regional Cable contracts, consolidation of organizations and EMS/Ambulance service for the region. S. Schneider stated that the RPC's work for the towns. He does not push his personal beliefs onto the communities but lets the

community bring the issues to him. Commissioner Ahern stated that he encourages group purchasing efforts. He stated that he appreciates all the work that the RPC's are doing.

Commissioner Lauer thanked the group for coming.

AS Director B. Gilding arrived to follow up on the request that he had given to the Commissioners on 10/26/17. He had requested that the Commissioners allow him to hire a full time Administrative Assistant now. The position was not included in his budget. He reviewed the reasons that he feels that this position is needed in his department and explained that he will have ample monies left from his contract service line which was budgeted to fund Sheriff's deputies to assist with supervision of the Drug Court legacy clients. After next week there will only be two (2) legacy clients remaining in the program and this will not require spending a large portion of the monies budgeted. Through the first quarter of the fiscal year only \$4,100 was spent.

Commissioner Lauer asked if he has space within his building for this person. He stated that he did and explained his plan. Commissioner Piper asked when the last time this position was filled. He stated that the position has never been just an administrative assistance position. Up until May he had an administrative position split with responsibilities of the Juvenile Restorative Justice program. His expectations of this position going forward will be all administrative and will be working on Medicaid reimbursement as well as state Drug Court funding.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he is not at all in favor of this. He stated that AS Director Gilding has issues that need to be addressed before he hires additional staff.

11:01 AM – Commissioner Ahern 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 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.

*11:04 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 because 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 Piper asked if there has ever been a dedicated Administrative Assistant position, in order to confirm her understanding of what Director Gilding had just stated. CA Libby stated that there was not. Commissioner Piper stated that she is surprised that such a burgeoning program has been able to accomplish its tasks and mission without an Administrative Assistant position filled.

Commissioner Lauer stated that with the new funding both from the State and Medicaid and with the AS programs booming there, are increased administrative responsibilities. She doesn't know

how we take advantage of additional fund opportunities without administrative support. She stated that these programs provide great services to our citizens and monies to offset the expenses is important. She stated that she is not happy about the out of cycle request but feels that it is necessary.

Commissioner Ahern moved to approve hiring a temporary Administrative Assistant for the period of three (3) months. At that time the Commissioners would reassess to see if all the representations that Director Gilding has made had been accomplished.

Commissioner Piper seconded the motion for discussion.

AS Director Gilding stated that he did not feel that he would be able to attract the caliber of person he was looking for on a temporary basis. Commissioner Ahern stated that he is not willing to hire a permanent full time employee outside of the normal budget process.

The Commissioners discussed the salary range and differences. Commissioner Piper stated that she seconded the motion in order to give weight to Commissioner Ahern's concerns.

The Commissioners voted on the motion: Commissioner Ahern voted in favor; Commissioners Piper and Lauer voted against. The motion fails.

The Commissioners discussed hiring a longer term temporary employee versus hiring a permanent full time employee.

Commissioner Piper moved to approve per Director Gilding's proposal to hire a permanent full time Administrative Assistant position for the Alternative Sentencing Department. Commissioner Ahern seconded for discussion purposes. Commissioners Lauer and Piper were in favor; Commissioner Ahern was opposed. The motion passes.

Commissioner Lauer asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the October 26th meeting. All the Commissioners had some edits.

Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes from the October 26th meeting as amended. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed Check Registers 1063.

Commissioner Issues:

Commissioner Ahern stated that he had spoken with an employee of the nursing home who stated that if the nursing home would offer 12 hour shifts they would not have staffing problems. She stated that there is no issue with money it's about the schedule. CA Libby explained that NHA Labore was aware of the desire for 12 hour shifts but recent attempts to make this schedule work had not worked due to staff wanting to create their own schedules.

Commissioner Ahern told the Commissioners that he had a request from a constituent for help getting someone into the dementia unit at the nursing home. He was told that the unit is full, has a waiting list and that the majority of residents on that unit aren't even baby boomers. He stated that he believes that we need to look at a reallocation of beds. He also stated that with the aging

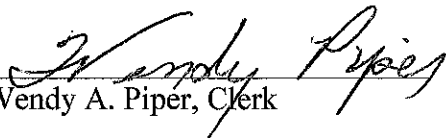
population we are probably going to need to discuss an addition. Commissioner Lauer pointed out that there is a moratorium on nursing home beds and we would not be able to add additional beds.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he had concerns with the Representation Letter that Commissioner Lauer signed on his behalf last week.

Commissioner Piper stated that she had attended the Grand Opening of the Alice Peck Day Multi-Specialty Clinic in Lebanon on Monday 10/30. It was well attended, and there was a "thank you" to the Commissioners for the CDBG that was used in conjunction with other funding to build the clinic.

11:33 PM with no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,


Wendy A. Piper, Clerk