

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday March 2, 2010

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Ray Burton(late) and Martha Richards, Executive Director Clough and Secretary Martino

OTHERS PRESENT: H. Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:10 AM

Maintenance Superintendent Oakes arrived to open bids for trash/recycle and #2 fuel and propane.

One bid was received for trash/recycle from Casella for a fee of \$950 per month. Supt. Oakes said that was much lower than last year and recommended the Commissioners accept the bid.

Commissioner Richards moved to accept the bid from Casella for \$950 per month which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. All were in favor.

Next the Commissioners opened the bids for the fuel oil and propane

	<u>#2 Fuel Oil</u>	<u>Propane</u>
Dead River	\$2.55	\$1.72
Irving	\$2.50.9	\$1.77
Sprague	Declined to bid	

Supt. Oakes said that he needed to call each company and find out today's prices as these were good as of the 23rd of February, and then he will bring back a recommendation.

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived with her report saying they had a census of 134 with a long waiting list.

NHA Bolander said that at some point Paul Hatch from Homeland Security and Emergency Management, State of New Hampshire, will be coming to the County to have the approved grant for the generator at Horse Meadow Senior Center signed. Horse Meadow is the emergency shelter for both the Nursing Home and Cottage Hospital and they did not have a generator.

NHA Bolander is going to the Legislative conference in Washington DC and asked the Commissioners if they had anything in particular they wanted brought forth. Commissioner Richards asked if the issue of inmates continuing their Medicaid while incarcerated had been resolved and NHA Bolander said that it was still a concern at present. Commissioner Richards said that she would like it noted/expressed that she is a proponent for single payer healthcare.

Commissioner Cryans said that if there are any kinds of efficiencies that can be done in the Nursing Home to save money he would be interested to know.

9:23 AM Commissioner Burton arrived.

Commissioner Richards was also interested in the push towards alternative energy and wood biomass in particular.

Commissioner Cryans asked that brochures be brought back and to gather whatever can be gotten. Commissioner Burton suggested the NHA Bolander take some brochures from here to bring with her to explain what NH County government does.

NHA Bolander expressed her concern for the number of people who are out on FMLA at the Nursing Home saying that there are at least 20 at this point. She said this is very unusual but her guess is that since their age averages between 45 and 60 that it could be wear and tear on joints and muscles.

A discussion ensued as to how FMLA works and other issues at the Nursing Home.

The Commissioners wished NHA Bolander luck on her trip.

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes from February 23, 2010, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. Edits, corrections and additions were made. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough requested that the Commissioners sign a letter authorizing her to sign the contract between the County and the State of NH DMV for the use of space at the Courthouse.

Commissioner Richards moved to authorize Director Clough to sign the lease agreement between the State and the County for the use of the space at the Courthouse, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the letter.

Director Clough said that she had a chance to discuss County Government month with the Department heads and the biggest issue is that no one really has money for employee overtime or food. The theme this year is Healthy Counties and there were some ideas tossed around. Commissioner Richards thought perhaps the County could look for some possible "freebies" and maybe there would be people other than employees who would be willing to help out. It was noted that the biggest issue with any event is budgetary and with the cuts that were made last year it's just very difficult. Grafton County is really the only County that does anything for County Day though Sullivan does have a pancake breakfast every year. Commissioner Burton thought that at the very least, a proclamation should be done and that if anything is done, it should be low key. More thought will be given to this.

Supt. Oakes returned with the up-to-date pricing on the fuel.

	<u>#2 Fuel Oil</u>
Dead River	\$2.54
Irving	\$2.51.6

Supt. Oakes recommend choosing Irving Oil saying that there was a \$2160 savings over Dead River which was based on a volume of 90,000 gallons.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the bid from Irving Oil at a price of \$2.51.6 per gallon, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

	<u>Propane</u>
Irving	\$1.77
Dead River	\$1.69

Supt. Oakes then recommended choosing Dead River for the propane saying that there would be a savings of \$3200 over Irving which was based on a volume of 40,000 gallons.

Commissioner Richards moved to accept the bid from Dead River at a price of \$1.69 per gallon, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Supt. Oakes said that the prices will be locked in as of July 1, 2010.

Commissioner Richards asked Supt. Oakes if the ozone laundry system at the Nursing Home was still working well and he replied that it was.

Human Resource Director Michael Simpson arrived. He gave the Commissioners their copy of the employee handbook and asked that they sign for them. He has been distributing them to Departments and employees and it is also currently now up on the website.

HRD Simpson reviewed his activity report saying that there were still 3 positions open for RN/LPN and 1-fulltime LNA.

He noted that Sheriff Dutile said that they had received numerous applications for Special Deputy and Court Security.

- Colonial Life was on campus and enrollment has increased 350%.
- HRD Simpson and Director Clough met with representatives from Primex and numbers still have to be reviewed. MVP insurance Co. has decided not to provide a quote to the County as they do not feel they can properly compete.
- A draft budget is complete though HRD Simpson still wants to review it with Director Clough first.

Commissioner Burton asked if employees are notified of any events or changes or offers and HRD Simpson said that he generally sends out emails or posts the information.

Commissioner Burton asked how educational opportunities are notified and HRD Simpson said that since there has been a change in the monetary amount, he has highlighted that information when distributing the handbook. He said that there is also information and catalogs in the HR Office.

The high volume of FMLA's was discussed and HRD Simpson said that it is much higher than he has seen in other places. He said that is due in part to the extended sick leave bank and employees being well versed on the benefit.

Commissioner Burton said that he feels that HRD Simpson is an Administrator who is well seen and goes out to Departments making himself available to employees. HRD Simpson said that he is trying to involve himself in the County and last week judged a weight lifting contest at the Jail and will be a judge for 4-H next week.

County Attorney Saffo arrive to discuss Mental Health Court with the Commissioners. She gave out cards with access numbers to service providers. The cards were produced and donated by DHMC.

Atty. Saffo introduced Alex Bogardus who is interning at the Atty.'s Office from Plymouth State. Her interest is in the Mental Health Court area.

Atty. Saffo discussed a two year grant that she was looking into which would implement the Mental Health Court and work similarly to Drug Court. She further discussed the potential plans and how the program would work. She said that there are already other Mental Health Courts out there that can be modeled after.

Atty. Saffo then discussed some concerns she had with the Justice Reinvestment study and went over some of them with the Commissioners. She said that some of the statistics were skewed

Commissioner Cryans asked if the grant mentioned above was renewable and Atty. Saffo said that there is a sustainability provision (providing the grant is still in existence). There was also discussion as to whether or not there were judges who were interested in the program.

Commissioner Burton stated that internship was a great way to get your hands dirty so to speak and touted its merits having had numerous interns in his office.

Commissioner Burton requested that any judge who might be interested in Veterans Court (another discussion) be properly trained for such.

Commissioner Cryans asked that Atty. Saffo provide the Commissioners with some of the Mental Health business cards and wanted to thank Gregg Norman from the Community Benefits Department at DHMC for the funding of the 15,000 cards.

Commissioner Richards said that she would like to see that inmates have them when they are released.

Commissioner Cryans suggested that A. Bogardus visit with B. Gasser noting that he would be an interesting person for her to talk with.

Sheriff Dutile arrived to get the Commissioners input on whether or not he should put his longevity in the budget. He wanted to speak with all three Commissioners and knew that Commissioner Burton would not be here on Thursday when he presented his budget. The Delegation had a lengthy conversation at the last budget vote and motioned that longevity be removed for Elected Officials.

Sheriff Dutile said that in his opinion and the opinion of two attorneys that he spoke with, the Delegation has no authority to remove longevity and that vote to do so was illegal. He said that longevity is a benefit authorized by the County Commissioners and the Delegation has no right to negate that. Sheriff Dutile said that the elimination of longevity in his pay is not something he will

take lightly as this would be around a \$1300 decrease. He said if the Delegation wanted to add that to his salary that would be fine but he would like some kind of understanding of that.

Commissioner Cryans said that personally he does not think that longevity should be given to elected officials and thought that this will very likely be an issue despite the fact that it's not a whole lot of money in scheme of things. He said that he thought that the Sheriff should put it in his budget and put the onus on the Commissioners to decide what to do when the time comes. Commissioner Burton agreed that he should leave it in there.

Commissioner Cryans asked Director Clough when the Delegation meets to decide salaries and she said she didn't know for sure but thought it would be before the filing period.

Director Clough said that she didn't think that adding the money into the Sheriff's base pay would be right in the event that someone else should win the election. She questioned why should that person be awarded that additional amount. She also said that longevity is a benefit decided upon by the Commissioners and the Delegation should be told that it's not their decision to make. There was further discussion about what is considered a benefit and what is required to pay legally such as social security.

Sheriff Dutile suggested that maybe the County needed to get its own legal opinion.

Commissioner Cryans asked Director Clough if the Commissioners could pass something that says that anyone (Elected Officials) not getting longevity would not get it and Director Clough said they are the deciding board.

Commissioner Burton said that it was the duty of the Commissioners to make a recommendation to the Delegation regarding the Elected Official's salaries and he suggested that they do that before the first of May and see what the Delegation decides to do.

There was further discussion about exactly what might be considered a benefit. The Commissioners as part time Elected Officials receive mileage which can be a considerable amount. There are also other perks such as hotel stays and trips etc. Full time Elected Officials do not receive mileage so the question loomed; does the Board of Commissioners have the right to vote to compensate themselves for mileage, which is a financial benefit.

Director Clough said that the legal rate for Atty. Bailey has been reduced by \$70 an hour.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that she had reviewed the law that addressed WW&L as an electrical municipality and because they were established before 1997 they qualify by statute and the County must therefore purchase electricity only from them unless or until the law is changed.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Richards said that she would like to pen an open letter to the Grafton County Olympians offering congratulations.

Commissioner Cryans said that he would write something congratulating individual Olympians so that letters could be sent to them directly as well.

Commissioner Richards discussed a biomass tour organized by BERC on March 19th.

Commissioner Burton asked Director Clough to ask Atty. Bailey if he may be excused from the hearing on the Elected Officials on the 24th of March as he will be at Governor & Council meeting.

Commissioner Burton noted the importance that members of the County such as Supt. Libby and Atty. Saffo sat at the table for the Justice Reinvestment because of the information that was brought forth by Atty. Saffo today noting inaccurate statistics.

The Annual Grafton County Senior Citizen's Council meeting will be held on April 5th.

11:36 AM With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk