

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
April 13, 2021

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer, Ahern, County Administrator Dorsett and Administrative Assistant Norcross.

OTHERS PRESENT: Register Monahan, County Attorney Hornick, Sheriff Stiegler, Lt. James, Detective Combs, Finance Director Libby, Maintenance Supt. Oakes  
Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM and began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**A. Register Monahan arrived and gave the following report: (\* see attached)**

**MOTION:** \* 9:15 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session. Motion carried.

\* 9:30 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** 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 Lauer seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes" Commissioner Ahern "yes" Commissioner Piper "yes". Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

B. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the April 6<sup>th</sup> budget meeting.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the minutes from the April 6<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor. Motion carried.

C. The Commissioners signed check registers paying employee salaries and County bills.

**D. County Attorney Hornick arrived to give the Commissioners an update on her office.**

Atty. Hornick submitted a packet of information to the Commissioners addressing concerns and questions they had asked at CA budget presentation as well as updates on what is going on in her office. The CA reviewed that packet with the Commissioners and answered questions. The Commissioners agreed to take time to review all of the information and Atty. Hornick will return next week to discuss it further.

**E. Farm Manager Nelson arrived and gave the following report: (\* see attached)**

**F. Sheriff Stiegler, Lt. James and Detective Combs arrived to discuss questions the Commissioners had on their budget.**

1. Education and Conference Line – Commissioner Piper stated that she had asked about the Leadership Academy and Sheriff Stiegler explained that there are two (2) staff members who have not begun the process and two (2) that have started. She asked what the total amount is that will be appropriated in the FY22 budget for this academy. Sheriff Stiegler stated that it would cost \$4,000-\$5,000. Sheriff Stiegler further explained the Leadership Academy to the Commissioners and answered questions.
2. Cruiser Equipment Repair and Maintenance – Sheriff Stiegler explained that he thought there may be some savings in the FY22 budget if they could trim that line back by purchasing the radio for an older administrative vehicle with potential surplus funds this current fiscal year. He noted that the radio in this cruiser does not always transfer or receive. It is not a safe place to be in when someone in that cruiser needs to respond to an emergency or has an emergency. He does not want to ask permission to buy it today, rather the end of May or June. Commissioner Lauer stated that she has supported this purchase from the beginning. Commissioner Ahern stated that based upon what Sheriff Stiegler is saying today, the radio in this old car does not work and asked where the funds are coming from to make this purchase. Sheriff Stiegler stated that if there are enough left-over funds in FY21 he would like to use these surplus funds to make this upgrade that is needed. He further answered questions from the Commissioners.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to allow the purchase of a new “in car” radio not to exceed \$5,553.35 and not to be placed prior to June 5<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Watch Guard – FD Libby stated that the Board approved Sheriff Stiegler to purchase one (1) standalone body camera in January out of surplus funds. He is now asking to purchase two (2) in the FY22 budget and the Commissioners asked if he still needed to purchase two (2) with the purchase of one (1) in January. Sheriff Stiegler stated that it is still necessary, explained what these body cameras do for their deputies, and noted that it is the best de-escalation tool that the Sheriff’s Department has.
4. Cellebrite Discussion – Commissioner Piper stated that they have requested that the Sheriff’s Department establish a fee for service for the digital forensics investigations. She explained that she understands the support for this service but what was voiced last time by all three (3) Commissioners’ was the need for a fee assessment for these services provided outside of Grafton County to offset some of the costs for this program.

Sheriff Stiegler explained that all of this equipment is assigned to Detective Combs; he is one of a dozen people in the state competent enough to perform this work. It is a collaborative effort and the Secret Service has provided this equipment to him. If Grafton County charges fees, the Secret Service will take the equipment back. Commissioner Piper asked if Sheriff Stiegler could provide documentation of the conversation with the Secret Service when he told them that the BOC asked for a fee structure. He stated that he would ask and get something in writing.

Commissioner Piper noted that it is a shame that the Secret Service would let a service fall by the way side because they are not open to concerns of taxpayers and that the program that they have worked out with Grafton County is being paid for by only Grafton County despite their success statewide. Lt. James stated that they have hundreds of thousands of dollars in equipment and training from the Secret Service that they utilize. They are asking taxpayers to fund one (1) tool. Detective Combs encouraged the Commissioners to come tour the lab and he can explain all of the different equipment that is provided to them and how they work individually and together. Lt. James explained that in totality they are not going to let this whole program go by the wayside, they just could not fund this one specific tool right now. They cannot support Grafton County going to a fee-based program because they get these tools and trainings from federal grants. When it is federally grant funded, they have an agreement that they cannot make money on it. There is an MOU in place stating that these are grant funds that are being appropriated out to be a resource for the communities and therefore they cannot support Grafton County trying to fund it. Commissioner Piper asked what happens to this program if this one (1) tool is not approved. Lt. James stated that they will still conduct investigations and take in certain devices but they will need to determine if it is something, they are able to do. They have this tool in the southern part of the state that they do have access too but it does not mean it is cost effective. Detective Combs noted that this last year they unlocked 123 devices with this tool. If they did not have this tool, those 123 devices would have had to be shipped out, or brought to the southern part of the state and that is not cost effective or an effective use of their time. The County needs to contact Senator Shaheen or Representative Kuster.

Commissioner Piper stated that she would withdraw her request to see the information from the agencies as she is better informed now about the process.

G. Supt. Oakes arrived and requested to go into nonpublic session. (**\*See attached maintenance department report**).

1. **MOTION:** \* 11:27 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 Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes” Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and would now go into non-public session.

\* 11:35 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

**MOTION:** 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 Lauer seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes” Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Lauer moved to approve the emergency repair of the Nursing Home wastewater system and sole source the repair Eastern Pipe Services, which is the only vendor that could provide these emergency services. Commissioner Ahern seconded the motion and all were in favor. Motion carried.

2. Building Automation Project - Supt. Oakes stated that the maintenance department has had a \$2,500 change order for their Building Automation System project. The overall cost of the project is increasing. The maintenance department is still working in the Administration Building and there is a problem with some of the Train Controllers that aren't transferring over like they thought they would and need to be replaced. There will be no additional labor costs but there are additional materials costs. Supt. Oakes asked if he needs to come to the commissioners for this \$2,500 increase. The Commissioners agreed he does not need approval for it as it is under \$5,000 but they appreciate being kept up to date on changes in the project.
3. Supt. Oakes stated that they have been studying the County Courthouse building, which has a number of issues including electrical. In this past year he has hired a Master Electrician, who has been able to analyze the buildings various electrical systems and in his opinion the Courthouse is one of the worst buildings he has ever worked in in terms of the electrical. This past weekend he found some significant issues regarding circuit panels. When the circuits were originally put in, electrical code rules were violated. He stated that he has Lee Carroll coming to look into the issue and he will keep the Commissioners informed.

H. CA Dorsett reviewed items he has been working on and meetings he has been attending with the Commissioners.

## **I. Commissioner Issues:**

1. Commissioner Ahern stated that he did his Just Omer program where he gave a 30 minute report on the “goings on” in Grafton County Government on Pemi Baker TV. He talked about employee needs and HR Director Clough provided him with two (2) PSAs for the program. She then sent him copies of the staffing situation and employment opportunities at the nursing home.
2. DoC Inspections & NHPR - Commissioner Piper stated that she was not able to attend the legislative call on Friday. She had an interview with Casey McDermott of NHPR on Thursday. They discussed what oversight the Commissioners in the Grafton County Department of Corrections conduct. She discussed all the ways that the Commissioners can access the DoC. She

discussed her role as the new President for the NHAC and she was asked by the NHPR reporter if there was any training for Commissioners for DoC inspections. They have a very strong DoC Affiliate but no training. A County Attorney talked about whether there should be state and federal oversight and if she would welcome that. Commissioner Piper stated that she would be reluctant to do that. There has never been a complaint on the part of the Attorney General as to how things are handed.

12:00PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Omer C. Ahern, Jr  
Clerk