

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER BUDGET MEETING  
3855 Dartmouth College Highway  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer, Piper, Morris, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross

OTHERS PRESENT: County Attorney Hornick, Office Administrator Farina, Farm Manager Knapton, Maintenance Supt. Oakes and IT Manager Ruggles.

Commissioner Lauer called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and read the following statement:

As Chair of the Grafton County Commissioners, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is a physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting. In accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Lifesize for this electronic meeting. All members of the Commission have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through attending at the physical location.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting. The meeting notice is also provided on the website of the Commission at [www.co.grafton.nh.us](http://www.co.grafton.nh.us).

Please note that all votes that are being taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer stated "yes" and there is no one in the room with her during this meeting. Commissioner Piper stated "yes" and there is no one in the

room with her during this meeting. Commissioner Morris stated “yes” and there is no one in the room with her during this meeting.

**County Attorney’s Office – County Attorney Hornick, Office Administrator Farina**

Atty. Hornick stated that Lise Solbeck is no longer working for them but they will still be receiving money from Bethlehem and Haverhill for providing services. They are receiving monies from five (5) towns for Garrett Bartlett’s prosecution services.

Education and Conference – Atty. Hornick stated that costs in this line have been shifted because of the other grant. Office Administrator Farina stated that this was increased to \$7,000 due to the number of staff members they have and keeping them up to date on their education.

New Equipment – Atty. Hornick stated that they are trying to be prepared for equipment that may need to be replaced. A. Farina noted that the individual legal assistant scanners are between \$700 - \$1,000. They were all purchased in 2012 and if one were to go down they would need that money to replace it.

Commissioner Morris asked what the additional staff is from last year. Atty. Hornick stated that there is an additional attorney and a part-time support staff person. She noted that they no longer have their investigator position as they felt that replacing that position with a support staff position was more important. CA Libby noted that there is also additional funding to offset some of these increased costs.

Atty. Hornick stated that they have budgeted to construct a door into the hallway out of the office that she is in to help provide some more privacy. She noted that there currently is no door into the hallway.

VAWA – Atty. Hornick noted that this line item is partially grant funded. They receive \$30,000 in reimbursement for this budget. They have changed the attorney doing this work that has resulted in the decrease.

Victim Witness – CA Libby stated that there are two (2) grants this current fiscal year in different lines. She explained that going forward July 1<sup>st</sup> there will be one (1) grant.

Medical Referee – Atty. Hornick stated that they have increased this line by \$2,000. This line item is for when the AG’s office reports to untimely deaths. She stated that they are anticipating an increase for the next fiscal year and the opioid crisis is a big driver of the increase.

Atty. Hornick stated that due in part to what Office Administrator Farina has worked hard to put together, they are able to all work remotely even down to the file clerk. She stated that every week she has a Lifesize meeting with the three (3) different groups of employees in her office. Everyone is able to do their work from home. It is a challenge but they are able to keep moving forward. Chief Judge of the Superior Court has instructed Dave Carlson to do no jury trials through May. She stated that their hope is to get all cases caught up by that time.

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

**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes from the March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Piper “yes”, Commissioner Morris “yes”, Commissioner Lauer “yes”. Commissioner Lauer stated that the majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

CA Libby requested permission from the Commissioners to use their signature stamps to sign anything the Commissioners approve during the meetings.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Morris moved to give CA Libby authority to use the Commissioners’ signature stamps for items that have been approved during their meetings. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Piper “yes”, Commissioner Morris “yes”, Commissioner Lauer “yes”. Commissioner Lauer stated that the majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

CA Libby sent the Commissioners the check registers that are in need of approval.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Morris moved to approve check registers 43; 1138; 1144-1146. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Piper “yes”, Commissioner Morris “yes”, Commissioner Lauer “yes”. Commissioner Lauer stated that the majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

CA Libby submitted a Microcredit Drawdown request in the amount of \$17,500 for Commissioner Lauer to sign. Commissioner Lauer gave her approval to use the signature stamp.

CA Libby stated that their IDN payment of \$325,749 was made last Friday the 27<sup>th</sup>. The County Administrators are doing a weekly phone calls. They discussed the issue of the MOU not being complete. DHHS has asked for some more time given everything they are dealing with regarding COVID-19. They have not been able to get it done but they still need the payments. Jim Monahan and Kate Horgan are not going to let them forget that the MOU is not finished but have asked that all counties make their payment. She stated that as far as she knows all ten (10) counties have made their payments. When the MOU is finalized either she or Commissioner Piper will let everyone know.

### **Farm – Manager Knapton**

FM Knapton stated that she had based revenue for milk on Agrimark’s published futures report. She used \$18.50 for milk price per hundred. Sunday night they changed that to \$13.88 which is a 25% reduction in her milk revenue. She stated that she is unsure how to present the information

to the Commissioners, noting that this reduction is catastrophic. She stated that she talked to CA Libby and she will present what she prepared. She noted that they can then talk about it after.

Vet Fees – FM Knapton explained that they are now using ultrasound to see if the pigs are pregnant rather than guessing. She stated that there is an increase in the line associated with those ultrasound fees.

Gas & Oil – FM Knapton stated that they are going to use some no-till practices this year on the corn. They will not be plowing and harrowing everything like they have in years past. This is hours of machine time and fuel expense. She explained that she left this line item as is because she does not know what the savings will be but she anticipates this will drop significantly.

Seed, fertilizer & Spray – She stated that the decrease in this line item is due to moving expenses to the farm stand expense line.

Custom Cropping – FM Knapton explained that this was over budget because of the labor situation she found herself in this summer. They ended up hiring more help for round bailing and the 3<sup>rd</sup> cut. She hopes this will not happen this year as her labor situation has been resolved. She increased this line \$500 as a contingency in case something were to break.

Bedding and Sawdust- FM Knapton stated that as of right now they cannot receive any because mills and borders are shut down. She stated that this is another COVID-19 expense that she does not know what the impact may be therefore she has left this line item the same.

Farm Stand – This new expense line includes all seeds, potatoes, spray equipment and repair costs for the Farmstand. She noted that the Farmstand repairs that will be taking place she was able to find the funds for in this year's budget.

Capital – FM Knapton stated that she is looking to purchase a used corn planter. Last year they spent roughly \$2,000 to have their corn planted. This would allow them to do the pumpkins and sweet corn. They would not have to hire this out, meaning they would avoid outside expense by making this purchase. It would also allow them to plant on their own time.

FM Knapton stated that they will be changing their spray company vendor. She got in some prices from a company who is moving into the area and is used by farms all around the area. Their current vendor Northeast Agriculture charges \$20/gallon for one type of chemical they use. Connecticut River Agriculture charges \$3.75/gallon. She reviewed other significant price savings in different sprays by switching to this company. She is working on a contract with the new company but these price savings will not be reflected in the FY21 budget as she is still working on the details.

FM Knapton stated that she is worried about her revenue. If the milk prices drop as projected she will go from \$407,000 in revenue to \$305,000. She stated that the letter she received from Agrimark stated that thirty (30) trailers were cancelled over the weekend because of schools and

stores closing. Commissioner Lauer stated that there is nothing they can do but wait and see what happens.

FM Knapton stated that she wants to open the Farmstand in June and extend their season.

**Maintenance – Superintendent Oakes**

Supt. Oakes sent the Commissioners the following summary of his budget and reviewed it with them.

FY20 Overall Budget - **\$2,338,744**  
FY21 Overall Budget - **\$2,323,234**  
(Difference - **\$15,510** / Overall Decrease **-0.66%**)

*Caveat: Not firm due to pending fuel bids in May*

**Wages & Benefits (accounts 001 – 130)** are generally down due to retirement of higher paid retirees being replaced by lower paid new employees who fill those positions.

Exceptions

- Maintenance (account 002) one new part time maintenance assistant and a couple of double step merit increases for two new promising employees. Supt. Oakes noted that he will offer to new employees the potential for a double step increase at their 1-year evaluation if they go above and beyond. He stated that he tells the employees that he will request the double step increase but it is not promised. If they don't warrant the double step increase the money will stay in the general fund.
- Healthcare (account 120) a greater number of new employees taking a plan vs. wages in lieu of benefits.

**Contract Maintenance (accounts 291 – 299)** are generally down due to shedding of HVAC contract maintenance, no specialized sprinkler work, No automatic transfer switch inspections and minor vs. major generator inspections.

Exceptions

- Maintenance/Farm Building (account 296) up due to FY19 spreadsheet cell calculation error

**Electricity (accounts 619 – 627)** accounts are generally down predominantly due to tariff structure changes and reduced usage in some locations.

Exception

- Biomass (account 628) is estimated to increase 6,000 kwh based on FY20 usage

**Water (accounts 629 – 638)** are slightly up due to a planned 10% rate hike in January 21. However, in the nursing home and DOC it is offset by a 200,000-gallon reduction anticipated in each facility

**Sewage (accounts 639 – 647)** are generally flat with small decreases in the nursing home and DOC due to water conservation

**Fuels (accounts 649 – 658)** as of now fuel costs are relatively flat but could change based on May timeframe fuel bids.

Detail

- Nursing home propane up 1,500-gallons
- Courthouse wood chip use up 35-ton
- Alternative Sentencing Building propane down 600-gallons
- Maintenance/Farm Building propane down 300-gallons

**Repair & Maintenance (accounts 805 – 838)** are all generally down and there is an opportunity to further reduce the Grounds (805) \$1,000 and nursing home (830) \$2,000, contingent on capital outlay/capital reserve requests approval.

Supt. Oakes stated that he has requested a part time employee for painting and grounds work. He explained that the DoC has said their part time person is not coming back to do these projects this summer around the facility and has asked if Maintenance would be able to assist. He stated that this part time person would also assist with other projects around the complex as needed.

Capital Outlay

Paving – Supt. Oakes stated that this year he is budgeting to pave the Nursing Home and Alternative Sentencing parking lots. This is roughly \$103,000.

Line Striping – Supt. Oakes stated that this goes hand in hand with the paving project.

Architectural engineering assessment – Supt. Oakes stated that this this needs to be done sooner rather than later. This process will be an intensive in depth study of the Courthouse. They will need to do a thorough review of all of the blueprints of the courthouse, all of the equipment, a structural engineer will need to come into look at the overall courthouse structure. There are a multitude of things that are needed in that Courthouse and if they are going to do this it needs to be done right. Having this engineering assessment done is very important ensuring that they have an accurate account of the problems are and what will need to be done so when the time comes they have the information they need to hire an architect to take this concept and put it into a blueprint. Supt. Oakes noted that the Nursing Home Bond will be paid off in FY 22 and by having this study done in FY 21 this may be able to segway into the end of FY 22 to take out a bond for the project.

Fisher Plow – Supt. Oakes stated that they have a plow for the new ¾ ton pickup they bought this year. The old plow they currently have was purchased in 2011 and has taken a lot of damage due to the rough pavement. D. McLam spent a lot of man hours repairing the plow and they continue to have many issues so they are looking to purchase a new one.

**Information Technology – Manager Ruggles**

*Expense*

ITM Ruggles noted that there is a 4% increase over last year.

Health Insurance – ITM Ruggles noted a \$12,000 decrease.

New Equipment – ITM Ruggles stated that this line has decreased \$16,560 due to the completion of the Windows 10 upgrades across the complex.

Education and Conference – ITM Ruggles stated that he has reduced this line by \$1,000.

Software Maintenance Renewal – ITM Ruggles noted a large increase in this line item \$65,000. He stated that this line item includes the costs for the new Kronos software that the Commissioners have been made aware of by HR Director Clough and CA Libby. ITM Ruggles stated that there are huge benefits with this software and he strongly supports the purchase of it.

### *Capital Outlay*

ITM Ruggles stated that \$17,936 is the 2<sup>nd</sup> payment out of three (3) for their new scale server cluster. \$15,200 is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> of three (3) payments for their Windows server license.

2 Network Storage Servers – ITM Ruggles stated that the current servers are eight (8) years old and tired. They need more space as well.

Admin Building Security Cameras – ITM Ruggles explained that the \$5,000 is for equipment only. The IT team will be doing the installation which will be a large cost savings. They are requesting eleven (11) cameras to be placed throughout the Administration Building and Farm area. There will be a couple on each floor of the Administration Building, one (1) on the back end and front end entrances and three (3) to cover the farm areas. These cameras will be stored on a digital server and will be able to go back to review footage if necessary. He feels this is much needed and is money well spent. It will keep track of traffic on all sides of the building. They will also be looking put signs up letting the public know that security cameras are in place.

5 Time Clocks – ITM Ruggles stated that if the new Kronos Software is approved they cannot use the current time clocks. He is requesting four (4) for the campus and one (1) spare. They will be looking to sell the old time clocks.

ITM Ruggles stated that his capital requests total \$64,121 which is an 11% decrease from last year.

### COVID – 19 Update

CA Libby stated that HR Director Clough sent out an update on the Families First Coronavirus Act with the availability of the emergency paid sick leave and the expansion of the family medical leave. They have had a couple of employees put in for twelve (12) weeks of leave. They also have people out being quarantined based on potential exposure or tested. She had a phone conference with the County Administrators and Senator Shaheen's Office. Senator Shaheen gave

an update on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coronavirus stimulus package and what that might mean to the counties. This package is made up of the relief checks being mailed directly to people, \$150 billion state stabilization fund where New Hampshire is going to see \$1.25 billion. The language in the bill stated that it will come to states and counties who have over 500,000 in population. She stated that she doesn't know if any of the New Hampshire Counties will qualify for that. Senator Shaheen suggested that the County Administrators work with their Delegations to make sure they are aware of the expenses and work to get some of that money.

CA Libby stated that they also discussed the lack of PPE and testing. The Nursing Home is in okay shape with PPE, the DoC has some PPE from DHHS but is having a hard time getting gowns. They are using trash bags and disposing of them after they are finished with them. They continue to look for avenues to find gowns. CA Libby stated that she received an email yesterday from a vendor who has disposable face masks available. She forwarded that email to both NHA Labore and Supt. Elliott. The CDC is now talking about how potentially people should be wearing disposable masks. NHA Labore is concerned about his supply of those. They currently have 174 handmade masks donated that employees will be given at the start of their shift and hand back in at the end of the shift to be cleaned and disinfected.

CA Libby stated that they discussed possible FEMA reimbursement. A potential phone conference is in the works to be set up next week. She stated that she has created coronavirus expense accounts for each department. She has instructed each department head to track each purchase they make that is coronavirus related to code to these accounts. This will make it easy to track costs associated with this account if and when they determine that reimbursement is available.

CA Libby noted that the County is also seeing a spike in unemployment claims. CA Libby explained that even though they have not laid anyone off, the County is still a chargeable employer for people who have recently left their facility and have lost their new jobs that they are in. They have also seen per diem employees who have not been allowed to come to work due to traveling or having symptoms apply for unemployment. With the new expanded unemployment benefits the County has to pay for per diem. CA Libby stated that all staff members, residents and DoC inmates that have been tested have come back negative.

CA Libby requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 11:06 AM Commissioner Piper moved to enter into non-public session for the purposes of the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted according to RSA 91-A: 3, II (a) Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote, Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Morris "yes" Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and would now go into non-public session.

\* 11:23 AM Commissioner Lauer declared the meeting back in public session.



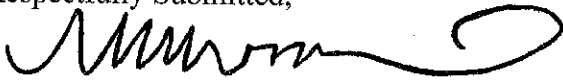
**MOTION:** Commissioner Piper moved to permanently seal the minutes from the just completed non-public session because they could affect the reputation of someone other than those of the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. Commissioner Lauer called the roll. Commissioner Lauer "yes"; Commissioner Piper "yes" Commissioner Morris "yes" Commissioner Lauer "yes". Commissioner Lauer stated that a majority of the board voted "yes" and the motion passes.

Commissioner Lauer stated that she had communication with the Nursing Home and they are concerned about not getting their normal allotment of masks. She stated that if she needs to call the State Emergency Operations center she will, whatever they need to do to get them the supplies they need. CA Libby stated that CA Labore stated that he feels ok right now with what they have and that he thought more homemade masks were going to be donated soon.

Commissioner Morris stated that she wanted to say thank you to all of the employees for how smoothly things are running during a challenging time.

11:26 AM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



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Marcia Morris,  
Clerk