

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONER MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Highway

North Haverhill, NH 03774

May 12th 2020

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Register of Deeds Monahan, Farm Manager Knapton, IT Manager Ruggles, County Attorney Hornick, DoC Supt Elliott

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

Register of Deeds Monahan arrived and gave the following report:

**Grafton County Registry of Deeds
Kelley J. Monahan Register
Report to Commissioners
May 12, 2020**

April Revenue

County Revenue 4/2009	\$71,971.93	State Revenue 4/2009	\$327,344.66
County Revenue 4/2010	\$70,431.27	State Revenue 4/2010	\$347,089.92
County Revenue 4/2011	\$58,015.46	State Revenue 4/2011	\$554,448.96
County Revenue 4/2012	\$43,460.07	State Revenue 4/2012	\$266,312.64
County Revenue 4/2013	\$77,814.70	State Revenue 4/2013	\$499,542.72
County Revenue 4/2014	\$57,883.71	State Revenue 4/2014	\$448,059.84
County Revenue 4/2015	\$70,858.98	State Revenue 4/2015	\$568,803.00
County Revenue 4/2016	\$68,285.49	State Revenue 4/2016	\$516,737.28
County Revenue 4/2017	\$55,338.00	State Revenue 4/2017	\$580,153.92
County Revenue 4/2018	\$66,783.98	State Revenue 4/2018	\$796,944.96
County Revenue 4/2019	\$53,290.14	State Revenue 4/2019	\$787,773.12
County Revenue 4/2020	\$58,146.62	State Revenue 4/2020	\$663,448.32

Foreclosures

2009 55 year to date
2010 80 year to date
2011 75 year to date
2012 69 year to date
2013 29 year to date
2014 31 year to date
2015
2015 23 year to date
2016 24 year to date
2017 14 year to date
2018 16 year to date
2019 25 year to date

Document Count

3/2019 1398 3/2020 1215
4/2019 1270 4/2020 1239

2020 10 year to date

1. On March 10, I called a meeting of the Grafton County Register of Deeds team and discussed potential protocols moving forward and I supplied them with Clorox wipes and Lysol spray to handle incoming documents. Gloves are always available. We began discussing limiting the public access to the research room.
We were grateful that the GCBC closed the building to the public soon after.
Due to our conversion last April many new functions of our software were already in place to allow the public to continue to search and record remotely.
The NH Register of Deeds Association kept in close contact and sought best practices and uniform policy to keep the offices functioning.
We chose not to work remotely from home due to unreliable home internet access. The danger of losing a document presents too great a risk of potential liability for the County.
My staff diligently came to work every day as the Registries are considered an essential operation. I will be seeking compensation for them using the overtime line that has been budgeted.
2. I have included a brief analysis of document count. We expect to see a wave of activity as many closings and court filings have been on hold. We recorded in March and April the activity from January and February.
3. We gained clarity on the hold on foreclosures from the Governors Executive Order when one NH Registry was challenged in court. Any auction or foreclosure sale that occurred prior to March 17, 2020 is valid, regardless of the date of the documents that come to be recorded. We expect to see a wave of foreclosures 90 days after this order is lifted.
4. Throughout this unpredictable time, I received over 40 applications and resumes for our open position and held 7 interviews taking all safety precautions. Our new hire started work yesterday May 11, 2020.
5. Early next week our new website at NHdeeds.com will go live. I've recently spent a great deal of time with Fidlar Technologies updating and adding new information.
6. We are considering our options for public access going forward. I have a conference call with the NHRD Association on Thursday morning. It would seem at this time that the consensus is to move to public access by appointment only and then limiting to 4 people until after May 31, 2020.
7. I attended all of the Friday NH Association of Counties conference calls for the NH Association of Counties on most occasions provided the update to the call on activity and issues from our affiliate.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley J. Monahan

Commissioner Piper stated that when they open the buildings to the public she feels all staff should wear masks. She stated that it is voluntary to the public, but feels staff should wear them as we don't know who everyone is in contact with. She was concerned about HR staff members

doing all the screening at the door and not wearing a mask. CA Libby stated that her recommendation is that all public who come in will have to wear a mask. Commissioner Piper asked about staff. CA Libby explained that in her office they rarely have members of the public come in. All of their offices are spread far enough apart and they are able to social distance if it is needed. RD Monahan stated that she feels they should have public in her office by appointment only and discuss the possibility of using the back entrance to allow the public in. The Commissioners agreed that this is something that they will need to talk further about as it is a Commissioner issue regarding all buildings on the campus that are closed to the public not just a Register of Deeds issue.

Farm Manager Knapton arrived and gave the following report:

- Agri-Mark contract for May – FM Knapton stated that Agrimark had already gone into a supply management agreement as of the first of the year. It is a month by month base that she can produce from. Now, because of COVID-19 and the oversupply she had to sign a contract yesterday that further reduced her ability to produce milk from May 1st moving forward. FM Knapton explained that her cap is 11,003 lbs. every other day. She was given two (2) options; a 6% reduction based on their March milk production and that would be a flat number moving forward until this is over or they could do a month by month reduction based on last year of 4%. She explained that in this setting the 4% reduction would mean a different number every month that they would have the ability to reduce. The penalty is significant. It is \$14 for every 100lbs of milk they go over their cap. She stated that 11,000lbs is a fairly easy to manage and all of the staff is aware of it. They have it calibrated and measured so that if they are getting close they can dump milk and feed it to the pigs. She stated that with a number that would change every month she felt that she didn't want to take the chance of going over and being penalized; therefore, she has chosen the 6% reduction based on their March milk production. She noted that while this supply management is new, what's evolving is the right to produce milk on this farm has become an asset. The big farms are now paying for the small farm's right to produce milk. She stated that it has hard to quantify at this time but it is a real thing. Commissioner Lauer stated that they then have the ability to transfer some of our allotment to a bigger farm for money. FM Knapton stated that this is a system that they have in Canada as well. She stated that it is still evolving but she wants the Commissioners to be aware that this is out there.
- The farm was awarded \$500 in grant funding from NCIC for the mushroom project.
- Changed fertilizer vendors from Northeast Ag to CT River Ag. On chemicals alone this represented a significant cost savings. Chemicals are 41% cheaper on average than with their current company.
- Row Spacing and Corn Trials – no till vs till and 20 inch rows
- Inmate Labor & No Court – FM Knapton stated that she doesn't have the inmates to work with her with no court being held right now. She stated that she has one (1) male in the barn, Sgt. Griffin has one (1) inmate and one (1) inmate gets out on June 13th. She stated that no new inmates are coming in due to the lack of courts.
- Farm Stand renovations are underway
- Farm Stand Model with COVID-19 – FM Knapton stated that they are talking about social distancing and the possibility of wholesale in case they are not able to sell the

produce at the stand. The Commissioners all agreed that they feel FM Knapton won't have any problems selling the produce as people are now realizing the importance of knowing where their food has been and buying local. FM Knapton stated that she wants to have a backup plan in place just in case anything were to happen.

IT Manager Ruggles arrived to discuss the bids for the purchase of 37 Microsoft Office 2019 Standard Edition licenses. He received the following three (3) quotes:

SHI - \$9,875.30
Insight - 16,390.63
Connection - \$12,453.09

ITM Ruggles recommended the Commissioners select SHI and their quote of \$9,875.30.

MOTION: Commissioner Morris moved to accept SHI's bid of \$9,875.37.
Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Commissioner Lauer asked if everyone to read the minutes from the May 5th meeting.
Commissioner Piper had a few grammatical edits.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to approve the minutes from the May 5th meeting. Commissioner Morris seconded the motion and all were in favor.

County Attorney Hornick arrived to give an update on their office to the Commissioners.

Atty. Hornick stated that her office is primarily working remotely from home. She has a conference call set up each Thursday to meet with each group in her office; Support Staff, Victim Witness and the Attorney's. She stated that the Attorney's calls are normally the longest as they are discussing cases. They are able to give law enforcement more help and support and how they might better investigate information they need. They are seeing the intake numbers are generally down from where they were before law enforcement agencies started being more careful with arrests and stops. The problem with all of this is when everything opens up there is going to be a flood, particularly in Circuit Court.

Atty. Hornick stated that they have eight (8) attorneys and Atty. Bartlett who is paid in full by the towns that support his prosecution. He has had less cases coming his way but in speaking with him once Circuit Court opens up, dockets that are usually 150 cases long are going to be twice that and they worry on how to be able to help support those Circuit Court Prosecutors. They have seen a slight uptick in juvenile cases in Circuit Court and a slight uptick in more serious juvenile cases. She stated that she will be helping with those around the county. Bethlehem has decided to hire a prosecutor rather than have Grafton County provide prosecution services.

Atty. Hornick stated that a challenge in their office is that without Grand Jury they are behind in presenting indictments. This Grand Jury panel that started in January and was supposed to go through June has gone twice. The Resuming Operations Committee that Chief Justice Tina

Nadeau has put together is meeting for the second time today and the County's Attorneys have given their input. They will be meeting today to discuss how to deal with the backlog of Grand Jury trials and Grand Jury. Everyone is frustrated because they cannot take people who they feel are dangerous off the street and the challenge for the law enforcement agent are the judges who say they will not keep them in jail because they are worried about the virus getting into the DoC.

Atty. Hornick stated that her plan for in person hearings that are supposed to start the Tuesday after Memorial Day would be to stagger staff in the office. The rule would be if the Attorney has an in person hearing, the support staff would be in the office as well. She explained that with their tight fit in the office she will require masks if staff are away from their desks and walking throughout the office. She stated that this situation has also forced them to think more into going paperless. Atty. Heater made a presentation to one of the other County Attorney's Offices on how to go paperless. She is completely paperless and she has the highest case load. Atty. Hornick noted that they have been meeting with victims & witnesses through virtual meetings.

The Commissioners signed check registers 51;1168-1170.

CA Libby reminded the Commissioners of the Zoom Delegation and Executive Committee meeting on Monday the 18th at 9:00.

Supt Elliott arrived to discuss the First Responder Stipend Program with the Commissioners. CA Libby stated that this is the same thing as the Front Line workers' stipend and the Department of Safety is running this program. The County has to fill out a roster of all employees eligible. The program is for 8 weeks and 2 days; they will front load the money to the county. CA Libby stated that most of the Corrections Superintendent's assumed it would call for all people in building with inmate contact but it only includes Corrections Officers. It does not include medical staff, programs or food services staff. It also includes the Sheriff and all Deputies. Supt. Elliott is adamant that all staff should receive the stipend. CA Libby put together a list of employees who are not included to see what those numbers would look like if the County chose to pay for those people as well. Supt. Elliott stated that he is very adamant to also include the administrative personnel as they are screening people, handling all the bills and keeping the building running. He stated that it would cost \$29,871 and it would run through June 30th. The cost can be absorbed in his budget and would ask that that the Commissioners please consider everyone in his building for this stipend. Commissioner Piper stated that we just did this with the Nursing Home and agreed to fund it. She asked if that instance in the Nursing Home was for everyone who had some kind of direct contract with residents or anyone in the building. CA Libby noted that the state revised the Front Line Workers stipend and now everyone who provides front line services in the Nursing Home is included. Supt. Elliott stated that his two (2) administrative positions do not have direct contact with inmates but they have contact with Correctional Officers, they are screening lawyers and they are handling all mail and packages that come into the facility. CA Libby stated that she disagrees because the county has administrative staff throughout the complex who have had to be here to do their job and they aren't getting stipends. Commissioner Piper stated that the intention is to compensate or give hazard pay to the employees with direct exposure. She stated that every department at this County has an argument for morale and as Commissioners they are doing everything they possibly can to thank and compensate employees when they can. Commissioner Lauer stated that she believes that the food

services staff, programs staff and medical staff need to be included but is having a hard time adding the administrative staff who have no contact with inmates. Supt. Elliott stated that these two (2) employees are second hand exposed all day to this as they are in contact with Corrections Officers, picking up packages and screening attorneys. Commissioner Piper stated that HR has to screen everyone coming into the Administration Building and they are not getting any compensation. They have a lot of departments at the county and that, if we do for these two (2) administrative individuals, they have to do for all. Commissioner Morris stated that she agrees with Supt. Elliott. If you are going into that facility every day, you are at greater risk and this is hazard pay. CA Libby stated to the Commissioners that if you do this you need to be prepared to have every department head here asking for compensation for their staff. Commissioner Morris stated that there are two (2) hot beds in society, Correctional Facilities and Nursing Homes. This is a hard line to draw. Supt. Elliott stated that he doesn't agree with the stipend to begin with as it draws lines between staff members. This is what they signed up to do. CA Libby stated that if there is any reconsideration from the state it is for the Food Services staff, Programs staff and Medical staff, not administrative. The Commissioners agreed that Food Services, Programs and Medical Staff need the stipend as well as they are dealing directly with inmates.

MOTION: Commissioner Piper moved to provide the First Responders Stipend to the Medical staff, Programs staff and Food Services staff only. There was no second.

MOTION: Commissioner Morris moved to provide compensation for all employees at the DoC when they are in the facility who are not receiving the First Responders Stipend from the state. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion.

Discussion – CA Libby stated that the Commissioners are going to have the Farm coming to them because they are dealing with inmates coming from the DoC. Commissioner Morris stated that for her its anyone that has to be inside of the Department of Corrections.

The Commissioners voted on the motion. Commissioner Lauer and Commissioner Morris were in favor. Commissioner Piper was in opposition. With the vote being two (2) in favor and one (1) in opposition the motion passes.

Commissioner Morris asked Supt. Elliott about precautions that they are using for inmates coming into the facility. Supt. Elliott stated that everyone is screened and has their temperature checked. If the inmate is asymptomatic, they are put in a different unit for fourteen (14) days and then put back into the general population. If they are symptomatic, they are segregated. Once symptoms are gone for seven (7) days they then go through the 14 days in a separate unit before being put into general population.

CA Libby stated that tests on two (2) new residents at the nursing home were both negative.

MOTION: * 10:40 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 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.

* 10:48 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.

CA Libby stated that there are now going to be weekly Commissioner calls. She has concerns regarding 91-A and Commissioners meeting to discuss county business. Kate Horgan has stated that this is not a meeting. CA Libby stated that the statute states that a majority of a body cannot meet. The Commissioners discussed it and agreed that Commissioner Morris and Commissioner Lauer will not participate in the meeting. Commissioner Piper will participate.

Commissioner Issues:

Commissioner Piper participated in the NHAC meeting. She had asked about whether they can get reimbursed for payroll expenses because of the stabilization program out of the \$125 billion gave to the state governments. CA Libby stated that they can get reimbursed for those expenses. She stated that they are still in a fight trying to get flexible direct payments to the counties for the COVID crisis rather than having it be funneled through the state.

11:00 AM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,



Marcia Morris,
Clerk