

## GRAFTON COUNTY FARM COMMITTEE MEETING

3855 Dartmouth College Hwy

North Haverhill, NH 03774

September 10, 2019

PRESENT: Commissioners Lauer and Morris, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross, Heather Bryant - UNH Extension, Farm Manager Knapton, DoC Supt. Elliott, Sgt. Griffin, Glenn Libby.

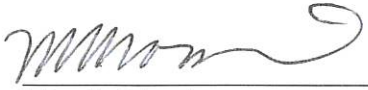
Commissioner Lauer stated that this committee is a result of a Primex visioning session. They are looking at the long term goals of the county and specific goals. One of the goals that the group identified as a concern was the future of the farm. Grafton County is the only working county farm left. She stated that the farm loses money every year so they have to justify the continuation of the farm to the tax payers. It was a decision by the group to create a group to come up with some answers by 2020. There's room for change so that is what the group is for. A goal was to update the current map of county land to look at what can be used for recreational use. Commissioner Lauer asked what the goal of the farm was. Farm Manager Knapton it's a complicated model. There's the history and the future. As a department head she also needs that direction. Supt. Elliott stated that they need to a different business model. They need to find a way to sustain the farm; the current model isn't working. FM Knapton stated that the farm has the means to change the revenue picture with its natural resources. Commissioner Lauer asked if working with the DoC negates making a profit. FM Knapton stated that it doesn't, they couldn't do what they do without the inmates and the DoC. Commissioner Morris stated that people are excited about the potential that they have with their resources, they can throw out the ideas. The plowing exhibition and sunflowers were two new great ideas. FM Knapton stated that back when this was started, farming as a form of rehabilitation for inmates, there were so many farms in the area these inmates could go to work for once released. Now everything is robotic and it is hard to get these inmates the life skills. Sgt. Griffin stated that its structure and getting up to work in the morning and those are two (2) important things for the inmates. Commissioner Lauer discussed the various ideas from the UNH Extension meeting last night for the farm. CA Libby stated that before they look at their opportunities they need to look at what they do today and figure out what is and isn't working. FM Knapton stated that when she started with the bookkeeping side of the farm she wanted to start enterprising to sort out the expenses that can be attributed to the various pieces to the farm and farm stand. She stated that it is important to know which enterprises are making money and which are costing money. Commissioner Lauer discussed the relationship with the DoC and the Farm. Sgt. Griffin stated that inmates would rather serve their time outside rather than inside. The moral of that individual is lifted by being outside. That carries quite a bit as far as who they are as a person and being able to talk to other people outside the facility is good for them. They are being able to get up in the morning to contribute to society. G. Libby stated that he doesn't feel they can put a value on self-esteem and self-discipline. He doesn't know how it is today but the inmates were always a supplement to the farming operation. It's up to FM Knapton to first identify what they do well and what doesn't work. FM Knapton stated that she likes the idea of doing different demonstrations to provide

foods to the jail and nursing home but if there are legal rulings that shut that down then it doesn't make sense. G. Libby stated that if he were still here they would have had a micro pasteurization unit by now. Commissioner Lauer stated that they are selling milk at a loss, maybe this is an idea to provide milk to the departments here that are paying for it. Omer Ahern, Jr. stated that if it is a matter of legislation you get a representative to change that. He stated that feeding food that is prepared here to the population here is a win win. FM Knapton stated that she doesn't know what the production in the jail is. Supt. Elliott stated that he would have to look into it. G. Libby stated that the micro pasteurization unit was roughly \$15k-\$20k back when he looked into it. He stated that they would have to look at the utilization of milk in the nursing home and jail. FM Knapton stated that it feels like people are interested in food growing and processing. It feels like there is a lot of support in this county and she would love public demonstration and classes. CA Libby stated that they cannot lose sight of figuring out how to operate a daily dairy farm. G. Libby stated that he thinks these ideas are great; changes won't happen without the ideas. FM Knapton has to figure out what would work best and the Commissioners decide what direction they want to take the farm in. Commissioner Morris suggested labor from alternative sentencing, people who need to do community service. Supt. Elliott stated that he does not think the population mixing is a good idea. Commissioner Morris suggested splitting shifts so they do not mix the idea. Sgt. Griffin stated that he feels it makes things harder, they've tried it before and it didn't work. Supt. Elliott stated that inmates get a safety course before they go out and are supervised. Alternative sentencing community service people are not properly trained. Sgt. Griffin stated that they need to focus on not depending on inmate labor. FM Knapton stated that it is sounding like she should be focusing a business enterprise and not focus on inmates. Commissioner Lauer stated that they need to take in account staffing the efforts for the future of the farm, shouldn't take on ideas that require more staffing. Supt. Elliott stated that there has to be something out there that will make money as milk hasn't made money in years. FM Knapton stated that they could expand the farm stand in many ways. CA Libby asked if the size of our dairy herd worth doing or do they need to look at reducing the herd. She stated that these are the hard questions that need to be asked. Heather Bryant stated that it sounds like most people in the room are saying give FM Knapton the lead and come up with ideas. FM Knapton stated that she needs her enterprise numbers to figure out what is currently working and not working. G. Libby stated that he feels it is an excellent idea that they allow FM Knapton to take her first half of the fiscal year numbers in December, look at those numbers and see if she can determine what aspects of her operation are efficient and what is not. Give her a year total on the job to see what she feels is best and then come up with new ideas. FM Knapton stated that will get the data for the animal costs and dairy as well. CA Libby stated that she wants to see if what they are doing now makes sense. Supt. Elliott stated that he will get the costs and volume of the amount of dairy used at the DoC to see if that micro pasteurization unit is something to look into as well.

The Committee set the next meeting for December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:30am.

With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'MMorris', with a decorative flourish at the end. A horizontal line is drawn below the signature.

Marcia Morris,  
Clerk