

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Administration Building
North Haverhill, NH 03774
June 7, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: Maintenance Supt. Oakes, Register Monahan, Brenda Dodge, Beth Wyman, HR Director Clough, SR. HR Generalist Deb Fuller, Nursing Home Administrator Labore

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

Supt. Oakes arrived for two (2) bid reviews.

Supt. Oakes reported that he solicited proposals from the following companies for the Test Well Project.

Horizons Engineering - \$13,800
DuBois & King, Inc. – Too busy to bid this project
Rist-Frost-Shumway – Did not respond to solicitation
Pathways Engineering, Inc. – Did not respond to solicitation

Supt. Oakes stated that he can have this project done by October and would know whether drilling wells on the complex is feasible, if the Commissioners award the contract to Horizons Engineering today.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he is concerned that two (2) out of the four (4) did not respond. Supt. Oakes noted that the county has a good relationship with those two (2) vendors that did not respond and have used them in the past. He stated that it is the same with fuel bids; he can solicit six (6) vendors and only get one (1) response. The Commissioners further discussed the proposals and Supt. Oakes recommended that the Commissioners select the proposal from Horizons Engineering.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to accept the proposal from Horizons Engineering for \$13,800. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

The Commissioners then opened bids for the sale of the Maintenance Department Kubota RTV. Six (6) bids were received as follows:

Kevin Fagnant - \$2,323.17
Jason Cook - \$ 1,300
Jeffery Lagarto - \$401.00

Quentin Mac - \$5,755.00
Arrow Equipment - \$2,500
Claudia Darrow- \$5,500

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to accept the bid from Quentin Mac for \$5,755. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Kelley Monahan, Brenda Dodge, Beth Wyman – Register of Deeds Office

Commissioner Piper started the conversation by stating that all comments made during the meeting will be constructive and respectful and at any time if a comment is not constructive or respectful the meeting will end. Register Monahan asked if that goes both ways and Commissioner Piper stated that it does.

Register Monahan stated that they have asked for another look at the salary survey as she feels that there was too much emphasis put on that survey, as they all know the Registry of Deeds offices are unique. She feels that the due diligence has not been done in regards to analyzing the positions in her department. She noted that during the last salary survey there was an error that was not caught because she was not allowed to see the results. One (1) position was not analyzed, and that employee went underpaid until it was realized that it was not analyzed. Register Monahan stated that this is not isolated to Grafton County. She feels that it is a failure of the Association of Counties to follow the bylaws and work with a uniform policy and creating cohesion among the counties. She stated that the Register of Deeds Affiliate put together a detailed spreadsheet on Elected Officials salaries and it is up to date as of last week. She feels as though the ball has been dropped. Because the department is unique and the employees have been dedicated and have taken on more roles, their positions are overlooked. She stated that she is a long-term planner and has always been an advocate for a master plan. She is looking at the future of her office knowing she will not be able to staff it appropriately because of the skill sets and constant learning that is required. She noted that the person who interviewed her from the last salary survey had stated that they are concerned about the salaries of the Registry of Deeds staff because of the technological and legislative changes. She believes some of the analysis done by the Delegation, Executive Committee, Commissioners and Administration overlook huge aspects of the jobs. She feels there is punitive action taken and does not believe people at Grafton County are objective. She would like to respectfully request a second look at the salary survey. Register Monahan noted that Rockingham County determined that PayPoint HR's initial analysis of the Deputy Register of Deeds stated the position was overpaid and once they dug in, it revealed that this position was underpaid. Register Monahan further stated that she could no longer accept the gloss over without an in-depth analysis of the skillsets. She stated that they are not allowed to speak in public due to the security risks of their office, which is why she has requested a nonpublic session. The survey did not address many items. She noted that it generalized that all staff are getting a 4.5% increase and her Assistant Deputy Register is getting a 3.81% increase. They only receive one (1) step before they are maxed out again and she would like that looked at as well for longevity. She would like twenty-five (25) years out of her junior staff members if they can retain them. Her staff are treasures and, in her opinion, are being disrespected.

HR Director Karen explained that their salary survey was the same for every position in Grafton County and every position on the wage chart was evaluated. In the surveys that they did receive info back on, the Records Clerk came back at 2.2% above market on the second round, the Deputy was .7% above market on the second round and the Assistant Deputy positions were 1.2% above market on the second round. The wage lines they were placed on brought all positions where they should be. She stated that they knew there were 15% of positions that were still going to be at max and that is something they cannot avoid. She stated that they feel the Deeds positions are unique to counties and the market that they were compared to were primarily other county Register of Deeds offices. Register Monahan stated that these positions are multitasking and taking on more roles to streamline their operation rather than bring on additional employees. She stated that it seems as though the Nursing Home and Department of Corrections take up all of the oxygen in these rooms for their needs. She explained that the Deputy Register in Rockingham County would be making \$80,000 based on her knowledge and dedication. She stated that she has fought two or three times to raise her Deputy's pay scale. She feels as though someone with the dedication and knowledge skills should not be punished. It seems like other positions always have room for growth and she does not see the high ends maxing out.

HR Director Clough stated that these positions were fairly evaluated. She stated that Register Monahan and her staff all had the opportunity to fill out the position analysis forms. They can only go by what the job descriptions say and the descriptions state that these are entry-level positions. There are no technical skills required. Register Monahan stated that the environmental conditions are not equivalent across the counties, as some are in Courthouses behind metal detectors and security. HR Director Clough explained that her department is in no less jeopardy than Register Monahan's department. Register Monahan requested to go into nonpublic session to discuss a current situation.

MOTION: 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). There was no second.

Register Monahan and her staff left the meeting.

HR Director Clough stated that the positions were evaluated fairly and they feel as though they are where they should be. CA Libby stated that what it comes down to is the positions are evaluated based on their job descriptions. Every employee had the ability to fill out the position analysis form and then the supervisors had the opportunity to fill out the form for each of their positions as well. HR Director Clough stated that the employees in the Deeds department filled them out and their supervisor would have then had the opportunity to elaborate on things that are not contained in the job descriptions that they felt the consultants needed to know. HR Director Clough noted that she would disagree with what Register Monahan stated about the last salary survey because she would guess that if the consultant at the time felt those concerns that Register Monahan stated, she would have known that and it would have been in the report that was given

to the county. Commissioner Piper asked if the employees filled out the position analysis forms that did account for other relevant factors, but they were not supported by the department head. HR Director Clough stated that the Register of Deeds did not fill out the forms for her positions. She also explained that there is cross training in every department, and according to the position analysis forms, each position in the Registry of Deeds has their own respective roles but she is sure that they do help with other positions as needed.

Commissioner Ahern stated that the Registry of Deeds positions are unique and asked if the salaries of the folks in the Registry of Deeds are comparable to other folks at Grafton County. HR Director Clough explained that those positions are in their labor grades with several other comparable positions in the county with similar requirements and duties. She stated that if a position is misrepresented in the job description then maybe it is not where it should be but all job descriptions were updated by the Register of Deeds in October of 2021. She stated that there were vacancies in that department and have been filled with people who had no prior knowledge and Register Monahan has stated they are doing a very good job and therefore it is a trainable position. CA Libby stated that it is very commendable that the county has employees that have been here a long time but positions have a maximum value. That is why the county has a longevity bonus. Some positions maximum value changes with the market and all salaries in the Register of Deeds office are increasing.

HR Director Clough then gave the following report (* see attached)

HR Director Clough stated that they have thought of a possible recruitment tool. She explained that their current waiting period for health insurance after hire is the 1st of the month after 60 days and therefore it could be three (3) months that a new hire is waiting for insurance. She stated that they have found that insurance is very important for some but not for others and it has been a make or break for some potential hires if they have to wait that long for their insurance. She stated that she would like to change the waiting period to the 1st of the month following the date of hire. Financially for the county, they do not feel it would be much of an impact due to the fact that they are offsetting a vacant position as well taking into consideration that not everyone signs up for insurance. HR Director Clough feels it cannot hurt and may help bring in some people that it is a determining factor. The Commissioners agreed and felt it was a good idea.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to amend the health insurance probationary period from 1st of the month after 60 days to 1st of the month following an employee's hire date. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

Agenda Items:

1. Commissioner Piper asked if everyone had a chance to read the minutes from the May 25th Commissioner meeting and the May 25th public hearing.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the May 25th meeting as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

MOTION: Commissioner Ahern moved to approve the minutes from the May 25th public hearing as amended. Commissioner Piper seconded the motion and all were in favor.

2. The Commissioners signed check registers 1173-1176, 2022-05.27.2022

3. NCIC Agreement – CA Libby stated that Katelyn Robinson contacted her. NCIC’s finance team is working on projections and had a question about the contract with Grafton County. It does not appear that the full \$50,000 will be drawn down before June 30th. As of May 20th the total expense was \$24,312.50. K. Robinson asked if the County would be encumbering the funds or if the County would let the contract expire and sign a new one. CA Libby stated that if they have only spent \$25,000 this year, primarily working with the Broadband Committee, then she feels the \$25,000 for next year should be enough and they should not need to encumber. The Commissioners agreed to not encumber the funds.

3. CA Libby stated that the Commissioners will need to hold a public hearing for a CDBG grant and she is recommending that it be on June 28th which would mean that meeting needs to start in the afternoon. The Commissioners discussed it and agreed to start the meeting at 1:30.

4. Dispatch Fees – FY2023 – CA Libby stated that Director Andross had sent a memo to the Commissioners for the approval of the FY23 Dispatch billing. The memo states that the Coos/NORPAC customers added during FY22 will remain unchanged, as they do not have a twelve (12) month cycle to accurately count their activity. Any increases have been capped at a 30% increase and low volume accounts remain unchanged from FY22 when they were increased.

Commissioner Ahern stated that he spoke with the Wentworth Police Chief and Wentworth is on a calendar year budget, therefore when July 1st comes and the Wentworth PD gets a bill they do not have the money to pay for the 1st six (6) months. The Chief talked to the Dispatch Center and because of the change in software, he was under the impression that he would not be paying any additional payment and it would be a wash. The chief said this morning; if the county could let him know in March then he could try to budget appropriately. CA Libby stated that they had this discussion last year. Dispatch receives these figures from the full year and therefore they would not have the information for Wentworth in March. She stated that they should be able to gauge whether they have had an increase or decrease in their activity over the year and could possibly project for that. Commissioner Ahern stated that there is a problem with this and he cannot vote for this today. The Commissioners agreed to have Director Andross in next week to discuss.

Nursing Home Administrator Labore arrived and gave the following report (* see attached)

1. NHA Labore reported that the outbreak testing is ongoing. The roommate of the resident who tested positive on Sunday has now tested positive. He stated that there are a couple of other variants that are projected to be widespread throughout the country within the next six (6) weeks. The amount of protocols that they still have to follow dating back to March of 2020, when it is nowhere near as severe as it was then, creates real challenges when they are already dealing with the staffing challenges. CMS still requires nursing home staff members to be out ten (10) days

and the rest of the county is only five (5) days. He expressed his concerns and stated that something needs to change because it is not sustainable.

3. NHA Labore stated that he met with Steve Miesel and the Grafton County Senior Citizens Council to see if the nursing home could help with food preparation. GCSCC (Littleton) has been without a head cook for over a year. NHA Labore stated that he feels as though the nursing home can assist, in the form of 65 meals over the course of the week so GCSCC can take it to Littleton and prepare the meals to deliver. They are hopeful to start this soon but due to the current Covid cases they think it would be pushed back some.

4. NHA Labore stated that he has agreed to serve as the Supervising Administrator for Sullivan County Health Care. He explained that the Business Manager has taken on the interim role of Administrator but because of licensing laws, they need to have a supervisor in place. He explained that it should not be a long commitment and they are interviewing candidates today.

5. Budget Update

CA Libby stated that after the budget development last Thursday where the nursing home increased their revenue projections by \$1 million and with the Executive Committee's feelings on the ARPA money, she has come up with a plan, which gives the county a .64% decrease in the amount to be raised by taxes without using any ARPA money. She reviewed the details of this with the Commissioners and the Commissioners agreed that they would like this proposal to go to the Executive Committee.

County Attorney Hornick arrived.

1. Atty. Hornick stated that both of the Upper Valley Prosecutorial Association and Plymouth Court Jurisdictional Association would like to renew their contracts for their Circuit Court Prosecutors. She stated that this contract is identical to the contract the Commissioners reviewed and made edits to for this prior year. Commissioner Ahern confirmed that there are no financial ties to Grafton County with these contracts. Atty. Hornick stated that these contracts are a wash. The Commissioners signed the contracts.

2. Atty. Hornick stated that she has three (3) new attorney hires; they just completed the training that the Attorney General's Office requires before they will ok their appointment to the County Attorney's Office. She stated that the Commissioners need to sign off on their appointment as well.

3. Atty. Hornick requested to go into nonpublic session.

MOTION: * 11:21AM Commissioner Ahern 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 Piper seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. 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.

* 12:13PM 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 Piper seconded the motion. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Ahern “yes” Commissioner Piper “yes”. Commissioner Piper stated that a majority of the board voted “yes” and the motion passes.

Agenda Items:

1. Budget Discussion - Commissioner Piper stated that she feels the Executive Committee will be happy to see this new proposal and feels it will take away the fears of the Delegation of using ARPA funds even though at the time the Commissioners did what they felt was best.

Commissioner Issues:

1. Commissioner Ahern stated that he has a request from a constituent based on a news story that the federal government is going to be issuing an order to schools. There will be a new federal mandate that will affect school meals and if schools do not follow the new mandates, the schools will lose their federal funding for their meals. The constituent stated that her town would be voting against the mandate and asked if the county could help provide the schools with food. He stated that he does not think that every school district will agree with this mandate. The specifics are supposed to come out in June and it may come as a formal request to the Commissioners.

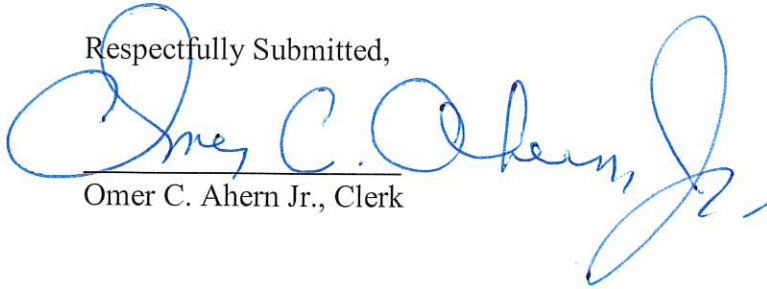
2. CA Libby stated that last Thursday when Vin Dogs Food Truck was here for the Employee Appreciation Day someone suggested maybe it would be nice for him to be on site one (1) day a week. She stated that he is looking for somewhere to be on Fridays and she wanted to mention it to the Commissioners. The Commissioners thought it was a nice idea for the employees. CA Libby stated that she would discuss it with the department heads as well.

3. Commissioner Piper asked if they have responded to the Bethlehem Energy Commission to update them. CA Libby stated that she would send them a letter stating that their request is still under consideration.

4. Commissioner Piper attended the Enfield Selectboard meeting last night and gave a presentation on the budget. She stated that it was a good meeting and they were interested in what the County was doing.

12:30 PM with no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk

Grafton County Nursing Home Commissioner's Report: June 7, 2022

Census

Medicare: 0
Medicaid: 67
VA: 2
Hospice: 0
Private: 20
Total: 89

FY '22 Budgeted Census:

Medicare: 3
Medicaid: 89 (Daily rate= \$212.62)
VA: 1
Hospice: 0
Private: 22
Budgeted Census: 114

Monthly Admissions/Discharges

Admissions: 1
Deceased Residents: 5
Discharges: 0

Other Topics:

- 1) COVID Testing Update**
- 2) Mid-State Health Dental Program**
- 3) Assistance With Food Prep for Grafton County Senior Citizens Council**
- 4) Supervising Administrator for Sullivan County Health Care**

Grafton County Human Resources Report
Karen Clough, Human Resources Director
June 7, 2022

HR Activity Report (05/04/2022-06/07/2022)

- ***New Hires***

| Department | # | Position(s) |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|
| Nursing Home | 3 (2 PD, 1 FT) | 1 FT Laundry Aide, 2 Per Diem LNA |
| Maintenance | 1 (1 FT) | 1 FT Custodian |
| Alternative Sent. | 1 (1 FT) | 1 FT Case Manager |
| County Atty's Office | 1 (1 PT) | 1 PT Asst. County Attorney |

Separations

| Departments | # | |
|----------------------|----------------------|---|
| Nursing Home | 6 (2 FT, 1 PT, 3 PD) | 1 FT Unit Aide, 1 FT MDS Coordinator 2 PD LNA, 1 PD LPN, 1 PT Unit Secretary |
| DOC | 1 (1 FT) | 1 FT Sergeant |
| Sheriff's Dept | 1 (1 PT) | 1 Special Deputy |
| County Atty's Office | 1 (1 FT) | 1 FT Asst. County Attorney |
| Maintenance | 1 (1 FT) | 1 FT Skilled Maintenance Asst. |

Reasons:

Resigned personal reasons/no reason- 3
Termination –
Career change - 1
Vaccine Mandate -
New job – 2
Relocated –
School –
Retirement – 1
Not Reappointed -
Not meeting Per Diem / Part Time Requirements - 3

- ***Status Changes/ dept transfers: 1 FT LNA to FT Dietary, 1 FT LPN to Per Diem, 1 FT LADC to FT Alt. Sentencing Director***

- ***Active Leave of Absences as of May 4, 2022 to present***

| Department | # | |
|----------------------------|----|--|
| Nursing Home – Nursing | 13 | (9 are intermittent, 9 for self, 4 for family) |
| Nursing Home – Non-Nursing | 4 | (4 are intermittent, 4 for family) |
| DOC | 3 | (1 intermittent, 3 self) |
| Sheriff's Dept/Dispatch. | 1 | (1 intermittent, 1 family) |
| County Atty's Office | 2 | (2 intermittent, 2 self) |
| HR Department | 1 | (1 intermittent, family) |
| Alternative Sentencing | 1 | (1 intermittent family) |

TOTAL: 25

June 15th scheduled orientation

None

Current Jobs posted/advertised

LNA's (27.15 FTE's vacant)

RN/LPN (16.95 FTE's vacant combined)

ADON

MDS Coordinator

RN Per Diem DOC

CO's (13 FTE's vacant)

Housekeeper (4 PT)

Evening Clinical Asst.

Dietary Aide (3 FT and PT)

Deputy FT

Dispatcher

Licensed Maintenance Asst. (Electrician)

Skilled Maintenance Asst.

LADC

Other business: Benefits Fair/Employee Appreciation Day May 26th had about 60 employees come through and lunch was well received and appreciated by staff. Health Insurance waiting period.