

GRAFTON COUNTY FARM COMMITTEE MEETING

Administration Building

North Haverhill, NH 03774

September 27, 2022

PRESENT: Commissioners Piper, Lauer and Ahern, County Administrator Libby and Administrative Assistant Norcross, Interim Farm Manager G. Libby, Sgt. Griffin, DoC Supt. Elliott, Pam Gilbert, Heather Bryant, Ben White

Commissioner Piper called the meeting to order at 11:30 AM

G. Libby reported that Hatchland Farm cut all of the County's corn and finished Sunday. The county is trading corn to offset cost of custom cropping. He noted that he checked on the erosion the committee spoke about and stated that it is no different from in years past. G. Libby noted that his next priority is to dig up the potatoes and another cut of grass.

G. Libby stated that they hired a full time Farm Assistant last week. He is going to concentrate on getting him to learn the milking end of the operation so B. White can take some time off and get on a consistent schedule for the winter. He stated that the pumpkins and squash are moving well.

Herd Update – B. White

B. White reported that their milking herd is about 50-55 cows. He has been successful in selling some of these animals as well. If they carry a few extra animals, it is a great opportunity to sell the animals to those who want them and make extra money.

B. White stated that he is very comfortable with having 60 cows and noted that the price of milk is still high. He stated he would rather see the number high than low.

CA Libby stated that there has been a lot of hard work and dedication to keep the farm going.

Commissioner Lauer asked if the plan is to do away with the chickens. G. Libby stated that he would do a cost analysis for the chickens to determine whether they should keep them. B. White stated that if they were going to keep the chickens they would need to raise the price of eggs.

B. White stated that they sold two (2) more sows Monday. They also have twelve (12) piglets that are all sold to Mark Robie. If the farm were going to have piglets year round, he would suggest leaving eight (8) pigs. G. Libby stated that they would need more discussion on what to do with the pigs moving forward. He thinks they should have them but they are not equipped to expand them.

Commissioner Lauer stated that they talked about expanding the educational opportunities on the farm. Supt. Elliott stated that Cpl. Balch has direct access to schools in Grafton County through Operation Impact and is on board with helping. G. Libby noted that Sgt. Griffin has done a great

job in cleaning up the barn. He would like to have an area of the barn where kids come take care of their animals to show at 4H shows.

CA Libby asked how they are going to attract a Farm Manager and noted that they are spending a lot of money advertising with no results. G. Libby suggested, with him being in the interim role, maybe the Commissioners look at trying to establish an advisory board made up of a multi-faceted group of people and instead of looking for a Farm Manager, look for someone who can do budgeting and that has expertise in the field crops. It might attract someone with less wages; have the advisory board meet occasionally and give their input and advise the Commissioners to direct a supervisor to get it done.

H. Bryant stated that if the Commissioners are looking try to hire another Farm Manager, the county should advertise near the University of New Hampshire and see if there are any recent graduates who would be interested. She thinks G. Libby's idea is a good transition plan to get them where they need to be but she does not feel you could successfully run a farm without a farm manager who knows how to farm. Commissioner Piper stated that they do not have luck with Farm Managers in terms of longevity and challenges with the inmate and hired labor. G. Libby stated that the person hired has to be able to milk and work weekends, which are tasks outside of the normal Monday-Friday manager. H. Bryant stated that they need someone who can do enterprise budgeting and see what is working and someone who can go to the Commissioners with recommendations.

Commissioner Piper stated that it appears that they might be changing their managerial model to correspond to what the three (3) staff people in the room are saying, as they are doing the farm work and are the experts. She believes they have the expertise they need in terms of the crops and dairy. G. Libby noted that the farm lacks the mechanical expertise as well as the crop expertise. He thinks they should look for more of a supervisor role and not a manager and use the resources that they have to make a better structure for the farm. The committee further discussed ideas for the farm manager position.

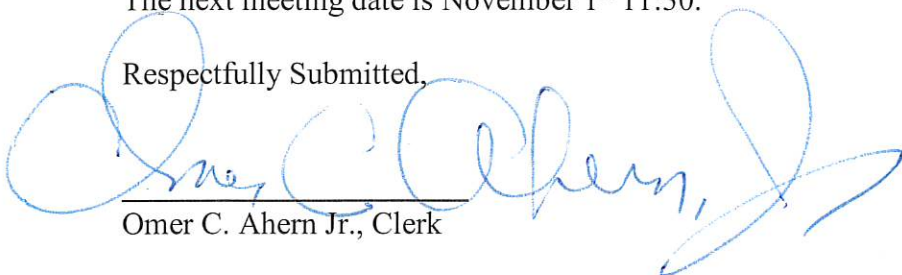
H. Bryant stated that they should decide what the mission and vision of the farm is for the next meeting. The knowledge base that is missing is equipment and cropping cycles.

Commissioner Piper stated that there are many good ideas on the table. Commissioner Lauer stated that they need to define the Farm Manager position so it can be advertised.

12:50PM With no further business the meeting adjourned.

The next meeting date is November 1st 11:30.

Respectfully Submitted,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Omer C. Ahern Jr.", is written over the typed name.

Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk