

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' BUDGET MEETING  
Administration Building  
North Haverhill, NH 03774  
March 31, 2022

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

OTHERS PRESENT: NHA Labore, Finance Manager Jurentkuff, County Attorney Hornick,  
Office Administrator Evans, Register Monahan

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

### **Nursing Home – Administrator Labore, Finance Manager Jurentkuff**

#### *A. Revenue*

NHA Labore reported that they are budgeting an average daily census of 100. He stated that they are not recommending a private room increase this year. They are looking to prolong private pay utilization.

#### *B. Expenses*

#### NH Admin

1. Equipment Lease/Rental – NHA Labore stated that they have been doing a utilization study of their Kia Lease. He explained that they have not been using it and they were going to make the decision not to renew the lease at the end. FM Jurentkuff suggested, based on the used car market, looking at getting out of their lease early. He stated that they were able to get out of the lease early with no penalties. The Nursing Home will also be receiving a refund of \$2,200.

#### Dietary

1. Food Supply – NHA Labore stated that he is recommending keeping this line level funded despite having a lower census. He stated that he has received word from their food supplier to expect an 8% inflation rate.

2. General Supply – This is increased \$4,000 due to inflation.

#### Health Information Management

Education & Conference – meetings in Concord are resuming

#### Therapeutic Recreation

Wages – Life Enrichment Coordination – NHA Labore explained that this position is this is the former Volunteer Coordinator position. They changed the position name but it falls under the same grade.

### Contract Services

Dental Services – they cut this line back this current fiscal year due to COVID and not having them in the facility and they are now bringing this line back up to where it was as they are having the dentist back in the facility. He noted that he had a contract with Ammonoosuc Health to provide dental services.

NHA Labore stated that the Nursing Home budget has a 2% overall reduction from last year.

### Capital Reserve

NHA Labore reviewed his list of capital reserve requests totaling \$163,002.66.

The Commissioners requested that NHA Labore prioritize his capital reserve requests in the event that they need to look at making cuts.

### **Broadband Committee Update**

1. CA Libby reported that at the Broadband Committee meeting the Committee felt it was appropriate, as they have a number of ISPs that they need to meet with, to not attend the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting with members of the Executive Committee and NHEC. Executive Committee leadership and Senator Hennessey are meeting with NHEC to learn of their timeline to deliver broadband to their customers. She stated that the Commissioners can attend if they would like to but are not required. CA Libby stated that she would be at the meeting. She gets the sense that it may turn into talking badly of the Broadband Committee and it should not be the premise of the meeting. She wants to be there in case that happens and she would like the Commissioners there so it would be a public meeting with minutes taken.

2. CA Libby stated that that it was agreed upon at the Broadband Committee meeting that the Executive Committee, Broadband Committee and Commissioners need to meet to discuss what the Broadband Committee is working on. She has added that item onto the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Executive Committee meeting. The Broadband Committee will continue with their schedule and meet with the ISPs every Friday in April. There will be a representative from the Executive Committee and the Commissioners at those meetings.

CA Libby reported that Rep. Egan stated at the Broadband Committee meeting that he is a member of the Broadband Committee by a formal vote of the Executive Committee. She stated that the minutes from May 24<sup>th</sup> 2021 state that Rep. Egan has dedicated his time to the committee. She noted that the only people that can appoint a member to the Broadband Committee are the Commissioners. CA Libby stated that she would discuss this with Rep. Egan on Monday.

## County Attorney's Office – Attorney Hornick & Office Administrator Evans

### *A. Revenue*

1. Roving Advocate Grant – Atty. Hornick stated that she is in the process of applying for this grant and does not have the figures yet.

### *B. Expenses*

#### County Attorney's Office

1. Asst. County Attorney – This line has a \$100,000 increase. Atty. Hornick explained that they have added one additional circuit court prosecutor, which is offset by revenue.

2. Investigative Services – CA Libby explained that they are building this position into the budget using ARPA funds. This year has 25% of the costs in the budget and 75% is paid with ARPA funds.

3. Education & Conference – Trainings are opening back up in person and staff will be attending various trainings.

4. Contracted Services – Atty. Hornick explained that her office is trying to go paperless which has increased scanning.

5. Dues & Licenses – Atty. Hornick reported a decrease in this line because they have done away with the subscription to Lifesize. They are now using Microsoft Teams.

6. Litigation Expenses – Atty. Hornick stated that everyone's fees and rates have gone up. There are also increased costs in depositions and evaluations.

7. Travel Expense – There is an increase to account for the new investigator position.

#### VAWA Grant

There is an increase due to an insurance plan changing to a family

#### Capital Outlay

Atty. Hornick stated that she is looking to purchase interior windows for their inside offices to improve the workspace for employees. The cost is \$2,000.

CA Libby requested to go into nonpublic session.

**MOTION:** \* 11:07 AM 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

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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) Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion. This motion requires a roll call vote. Commissioner Piper called the roll. Commissioner Lauer “yes”; 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.

\* 11:54 AM Commissioner Piper declared the meeting back in public session.

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

### **Register of Deeds – Register Monahan**

Register Monahan requested that the attached presentation overview be in the minutes as her report. (\* see attached).

Commissioner Piper stated that this is a Budget Hearing. As the Chair, she had asked that they start on the line-item justifications and Register Monahan overrode that, which she is not enabled to do. The only question and conversation that had occurred thus far was not related to the budget. She stated that the report that Register Monahan reviewed will be included in the minutes, but she requests they review the budget.

Register of Deeds Salary – Commissioner Piper stated that there is no justification for including the \$20,000 increase in this salary line. She stated that the Commissioners cannot raise an elected official’s salary without the Executive Committee approval. Register Monahan stated that she does not expect to discuss that line. Commissioner Piper asked why it is in the Commissioners Proposed Budget. Register Monahan explained that historically this is how raises have been asked for by Elected Officials. The Elected Official will put in a raise in the budget with a notation. CA Libby stated that in the past they have had Elected Officials put dollar amounts in the department request lines. The Delegation will not have set Elected Officials wages by the time the Commissioners set their budget. This request can be reflected in the department recommendation column. What comes out of the Delegation meeting to set Elected Officials Salaries is what will be in the budget. Register Monahan stated that she emailed them six (6) weeks ago asking for the RSA on a preapproval authorization. Last year when she presented a letter for a review, she did not ask for a raise. She asked that it be considered and this year she is asking for a raise.

Register Monahan explained that she is not asking to fill a vacant position as a new employee distracts from the trained staff.

Register Monahan noted that they would be seeing more public in their office. They spent the money on the scanning project to enable users to utilize the internet ,but they do not know how long that will take to pan out.

Register Monahan answered questions from the Commissioners.

### *Surcharge*

Microfilm Reader – Register Monahan explained that if they were to lose internet or the grid, with generator power and this Microfilm Reader, they could continue to search title and print copies.

### 5 Year Projected Plans

Historic Plan Restoration Repair – Register Monahan explained that she is still waiting for the quote. She stated that they could stagger this project or bond it.

Hardware Replacement 5 Year Cycle – Register Monahan has been working with Ed Wargo from SNS, to help him understand their replacement cycle how you cannot put the cart in front of the horse because they need to know that Fidler Technology is compatible with Windows 11. The end of life for their desktops and scanners is 10/2024. They need to set aside \$100,000 if they plan to use surcharge.

### Social Services – Commissioner Piper

Commissioner Piper stated that she is going to recommend level funding of all agencies and that is because of the effect of inflation and increased fuel costs on County Government in general. While she is sympathetic to increase requests, the increase in operating costs are going to be very hard on taxpayers. There were a few agencies that requested additional funding, and she is sorry that this year it does not look like additional funding can be possible.

Commissioner Piper stated that there were three (3) agencies that requested increases; West Central, Twin Pines and Transport Central. She discussed those requests with the Commissioners. Commissioner Lauer stated that the requested increases were not large but there were many agencies that did not request an increase. She is supportive of level funding.

The Commissioners agreed to level fund all agencies.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Ahern moved to send a letter to SNS that the Grafton County intends to cancel its contract with SNS effective May 31<sup>st</sup> due to not being cooperative in getting information needed to prepare the FY23 Budget as well as being disappointed in the service provided. Commissioner Lauer seconded the motion and all were in favor.

12:31 PM With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Omer C. Ahern Jr., Clerk

**Grafton County Registry of Deeds**  
**Kelley J. Monahan Register**  
**FY23 Budget Presentation Overview**  
**March 31, 2022**

To: The Grafton County Board of Commissioners and County Administrator Libby,

**The Grafton County Registry of Deeds survived and thrived through the pandemic based on the preparations that were put in place prior to this emergency being declared.**

- **Tapestry** – The search platform which is designed for the Title Industry kept the enormous re-financing activity which our Country experienced moving and aided the citizen in allowing access to home equity which helped keep many afloat.
- **Laredo**- The search platform which is designed for the professional user, and municipal use. This helped keep the work of the attorneys, real estate professionals and town governments flowing.
- **Laredo Connect** – This is a new program that we set into motion in the fall. It allows all of our thousands of account holders to view and pay on their accounts. This program greatly reduces phone calls and emails related to billing questions. It also allows for credit card payments, where Fidlar Technologies assumes the middle man position on risk, cost and processing.
- **Ava** – The search platform that is a free and simple search designed for the public. Copies can be printed at the user’s computer for a simple fee of \$1.05. One dollar to Grafton County, .05 to Fidlar Technologies.
- **E-recording** – The ability for documents to be submitted for recording via the internet by funneling the documents from the submitter through a vetted and approved vendor. This allows for transactions which originate from outside of New Hampshire to be recorded quickly and by-passes the traditional paper recording where USPS, Fed Ex, or UPS or documents which have come to the counter being “walked in.”

The downside to this platform is that it takes longer to record and index these documents in the Registry, and we are seeing increasing issues with fraud and insufficient funds. Luckily the e-recording companies assume these losses. However, tracking down bad payments and the accounting issues that accompany them requires a great deal of staff time which robs us of the critical function of indexing.

- **Telephone support**- My team was on-site throughout the pandemic. We have two phone lines and they are in use much of the time. Our phone is answered on the first or second ring by a friendly and knowledgeable member of my team. We provide a great deal of assistance to the public who either lacks access to the internet or needs assistance in navigating a complicated process. Death certificates must be recorded for an estate to be settled. People need to record the original and it is returned two weeks after being recorded, indexed, proofed and verified. We are here as public servants.
- **Remote recording and indexing** –This was not available to us as an option in Grafton County due to lack of internet at the homes of my team. .  
We were the only county in New Hampshire who could not pivot to this innovation.  
We had the equipment, Fidlar Technologies provided the technology and support.  
**I cannot stress enough how important the Grafton County Broadband project is for the future operations of this office.**

- **Monarch**- A new program that I set in motion in January which provides the municipal governments with a portal for the town transfer documents which reflect change in ownership for the purposes of taxation. This automation reduces paper use, postage, and provides a constant stream of documents rather than a month hard copy bulk mailing. It also saves staff time.
- **Last but far from least, is my staff.** We have had a big transition with employees in recent months. We are now an energized team with great synergy and dedication. We love coming to work. My team is friendly, knowledgeable and committed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Kelley Monahan".

Kelley Monahan  
Register of Deeds



**Grafton County Registry of Deeds  
Kelley J. Monahan Register  
FY23 Budget Presentation Overview  
March 31, 2022**

**Line item justifications**

01-4120-001 Clerical – We are not replacing a position. We will be considering part-time unbenefited help and overtime in the event that we see an uptick in document volume or something happens to me or my team of 4. We have divided the responsibilities and triggered more automations. Clerical related lines reflect the changing of the make-up of the staff.

01-4120-170 Conference – I see no need to attend Fidlar Annual Education Conference in Davenport or PRIA Annual Conference. Systems have developed which provide a Register of Deeds with the ability keep abreast of emerging issues in a more efficient manner. I will not be attending the NH Association of Counties Conference. My affiliate will be voting on our plans for our annual meeting and conference in the next few weeks. Many of the NH Registers of Deeds are short staffed. We are focused on recording the surging document activity and assisting the public.

01-4120-380 Postage- rates have risen.

01-4120-690 Internet Expense – exact – 2 contracts in place. Independent of Grafton IT for security purposes.

01-4120-870 Micro-film- This line now represents off-site storage and the annual production. The total micro-film/Historical contract was financed by the Registry of Deeds Surcharge/Equipment fund in the previous budget cycle.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelley Monahan  
Register of Deeds

### Grafton County Registry of Deeds Paper Vs E-Records

