

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Monday January 30, 2006

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, William Gabler and Ray Burton, Executive Director Julie Clough, and Secretary Jeri Martino.

The Meeting was called to order 9:58 AM

Mr. Paul Hatch, a field representative from New Hampshire Emergency Management Services was a guest of Commissioner Burton. Commissioner Cryans welcomed Mr. Hatch and asked him to give a brief synopsis of his position.

Mr. Hatch said there are seven field reps total. Each town is supposed to have an emergency service director, but if not, then the job falls to the town manager or selectmen. Mr. Hatch works as liaison or facilitator to towns, helping to bring them grants and working cooperatively with them in their emergency services. Types of emergencies include medical and natural disasters. Some of the things the agency works on is setting up pods or locations for people to go to in case of a disaster or when in need of collective medical attention, such as inoculations. Commissioner Cryans thanked Commissioner Burton for bringing someone from the State in for a visit and asked if he had any questions of Mr. Hatch.

Commissioner Burton asked Mr. Hatch, hypothetically, if there was a need for a large group of people to be vaccinated in this area, where would they go? Mr. Hatch replied that Health and Human Services would be the lead agency in a case like that but the thought was to have smaller pods or locations to go to as opposed to one central location. This could speed the process and provide local assistance to people.

Commissioner Burton then noted that we have approximately 500 people here on the grounds of the Complex which could be considered a pod in itself. He then asked how would people receive the word and what protection exists if a dam should break.

Mr. Hatch replied that there are currently no warning systems other than a telephone tree and this is a concern that needs to be addressed somehow.

Commissioner Gabler noted that there is a significant water supply issue with the Complex and asked Mr. Hatch if he had any suggestions.

Mr. Hatch replied that there are grants available for cisterns that can be placed underground which hold about 30,000 gallons and may be a consideration.

Mr. Hatch asked if the County had an emergency preparedness plan. Executive Director Clough said that it was a work in progress.

Commissioner Cryans asked there were things that Grafton County could be doing with the Office of Emergency Services or is it primarily set up to work with towns. Mr. Hatch replied that it is primarily set up for towns but that he would more than welcome the opportunity to work with the County if asked. Having knowledge of the plan to construct a new communication tower, and the grant through Homeland Security, Mr. Hatch stated that it would help considerable if the Commissioners were to send a letter requesting the grant money for the communications towers in conjunction with the request from the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Cryans asked Mr. Hatch to touch base with the towns in his district, Hanover, Lebanon and Enfield.

Commissioner Burton asked Mr. Hatch if he would be willing to work with the Executive Director in setting up a plan for Grafton County and Mr. Hatch replied in the affirmative saying that if it were not he personally, then there were other staff members and grants available for such things and that he would be more than happy to set that up.

Commissioner Gabler said that he would be willing to go out as a facilitator and noted that the county can supply, via the jail, labor when it is needed in emergency areas, noting that it was not a "blank check" but that assets at the county were available.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Mr. Hatch for his time and for the information provided.

Superintendent Libby arrived as the Commissioners had some questions regarding the duties of the night watchman. Supt. Libby stated that the position was created in 2004 and uses a signage sheet which is initialed after the person checks the area. At present one of the night watchmen has retired while the other has given his two week notice. Supt. Libby is in the process of filling the positions. One position will be full time with benefits, and one position will be part time.

Commissioner Burton asked if the watchman walk from one hay area to the other and do they have radios and where does the transmission go. Supt. Libby answered yes to both questions and the transmission goes directly to the jail, and in fact on the evening of the fire, the dispatch center was monitoring the jail's transmission and toned the fire as soon as they heard of it on the radio, which resulted in a quicker response.

Commissioner Burton asked if the old clock style checks were no longer being used and Supt. said no, in his opinion the signage sheet was in keeping with all the other policies and worked fine.

Supt. Libby stated that the watchman hours are 7PM to 3AM which still leaves some time open when the farm is not manned for watch. Commissioner Gabler asked if video camera would be a help. Video cameras may be helpful in those areas, Supt. Libby said, but "There's nothing better than a set of eyes for checking the areas".

Commissioner Cryans said that the training of new people will be key. Supt. Libby agreed saying that he does much of the training himself so that he can make sure the person knows exactly what he/she is doing. Supt. Libby is already looking at a couple of people to hire.

On another note, Commissioner Burton said that the Federal Food Surplus is being cut back and he has asked Commissioner Wrenn to take a look at the fields that are not in use in the Concord area, for growing vegetables to give away. Commissioner Burton is considering asking the other five counties if they would be interested in growing food to give away.

Attorney St. Hilaire, Office Manager Alison Farina and Maintenance Superintendent Jim Oakes arrived to talk about some revisions to the attorney's office. Atty. St. Hilaire presented a couple of different scenarios which would involve re-doing some bathrooms, changing walls and cordoning off hallways. This plan is being presented in an attempt to keep the Atty. Office more private and secure. This is a new plan that Supt. Oakes has not had a chance to look over, so he needs some time to evaluate both plans presented and see if one or the other is doable. No decisions can be made before there is a cost estimate presented.

Ms. Farina presented the Commissioners with an out of cycle pay raise for one of her staff

members who actually should have received the increase, but the evaluation was missed at the time. The increase was already approved in last years budget, it simply got overlooked. Pay would be retroactive back to July 1, 2005.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the step increase and was seconded by Commissioner Gabler. All were in favor.

The Commissioners thanked Attorney St. Hilaire and Ms. Farina for coming in.

11:48 The Commissioners broke for lunch

12:30 The meeting resumed.

Commissioner Gabler moved to approve the minutes from January 23, 2006, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

The Commissioners signed additional thank you notes to employees who were on duty the night of the fire.

The Commissioners signed a thank you letter to the Byrne Foundation.

Executive Director Clough presented a letter from NIC which stated their receipt of the application, which stated that they were reviewing the application and would get back to the county.

The Commissioners signed the close out paperwork for MicroCredit grant. This is the last drawdown.

Executive Director Clough presented a letter from a gentleman who was upset with the county, expressing the fact that he thought the county had let him down and didn't help him enough with his legal issues with the Hanover Police Department, of which the Sheriff's Department really has no legal jurisdiction.

The Executive Director informed the Commissioners that she had received a call from the US Postal Service expressing interest in renting the old Commissioners' Building. It was clear that funds were not available at this time to do so, but the gentleman asked for further information on the building which the Executive Director will send right along. The consensus was that the USPS would make an excellent tenant in that building.

*12:50 PM – Commissioner Gabler moved to enter into Executive Session as per RSA 91-A:3, Paragraph II, Section a). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

12:52 PM – Commissioner Burton moved to come out of Executive Session and to permanently seal the Minutes from the Session. Commissioner Gabler seconded the motion. All were in favor. No motions were made and no actions were taken while in Executive Session.

Commissioner Cryans attended the gathering for Activities Professional Week wherein a proclamation and pins were given to employees who had experienced a very difficult year in the department, but made it through brilliantly.

Commissioners Gabler and Burton attended a breakfast at Plymouth State and Commissioner Gabler suggested that Plymouth State and Grafton County form a more symbiotic union.

The Commissioners suggested extending a letter of congratulations to the new Chief of Police of Lebanon, Jim Alexander.

The Commissioners held a meeting with Commissioners from both Sullivan County and Coos County to discuss the possibility of a cooperative regional correctional facility.

Those from Sullivan County: Commissioners Ethel Jarvis, Ben Nelson and Don Clark and Superintendent Scott Hagar.

Those from Coos County: Commissioners Bing Judd and Tom Brady. Superintendent Glenn Libby was also in attendance.

Commissioner Cryans began by informing the group that Grafton County was presently reviewing the NIC assessment and trying to decide where to go from there. He turned the floor over the Supt. Libby who stated that it has been necessary to look at the needs of the jail. The policies are okay but the physical plan is not adequate. Supt. Libby referenced a report done by NIC in 1981 on this very jail that stated that the overall population of Grafton County would rise to 85,000 people in 2005, which it has, but that the population of the jail would only rise to about 50. At present it is averaging approx. 115 inmates. Supt. Libby said that the hope was to be able to attend the PONI program in Colorado and receive some guidance on what to do. The thought was to see if there was anything that could be done as a team. (meaning other counties)

Commissioner Clark stated that Sullivan County was further along in the process in that they have already been to Colorado and have sent out an RFP which is due March 3, 2006. The Sullivan County facility was built in 1978 yet it is not efficient in operation. It was built for 44 inmates with a max of 65 and are currently up in the 100's. There is a need for office space, programs and an observation space to name a few.

Commissioner Judd from Coos said that they average about 35 inmates

There was a long discussion amongst everyone about the new population of inmates being females, and how services to them differ from those of male inmates. Space is becoming limited and there are a whole new set of needs to consider.

It was Commissioner Burtons idea originally, to open the lines of communication between sister counties when considering the building of a new facility and he noted that the largest growth area is in corrections and that the county jail is the first stop.

Commissioner Judd suggested that perhaps Grafton County put on an addition for just females and then they can be transported here.

Commissioner Cryans noted that one of the advantages to county services is their local proximity, making visits for relatives and friends more convenient.

Commissioner Cryans asked in regard to programs, if the women are being short changed. Supt Hagar said that at times the population is not high enough to make the programs worthwhile and that recreational facilities are not equal, but the goal is to keep a balance. Supt. Libby stated that he thought that both men and women are shortchanged, just that the women are more so.

Commissioner Clark said that seeing the women all together in one facility would probably be a good thing and that perhaps finding out what the critical mass is for services might be worthwhile as it would then become efficient to offer services and programs.

Supt. Hagar suggested that when Grafton County builds their new facility that it double the capacity for women.

Commissioner Judd suggested that there were a lot of inmates who are in jail who shouldn't be and if there were other programs available then it might keep them out.

Commissioner Jarvis wondered if it would be a good idea to try to find out what kind of backgrounds most of the drug offenders come from to see if the problem could be circumvented. Supt. Libby suggested that there is no particular type of drug user, that they can come from low income to upper class, makes no differentiation.

Supt. Hagar said you need to look at treatment facilities in the State when you're looking a recidivism rates.

Commissioner Cryans thanked everyone for their time and input and made it clear that he appreciated what everyone brought to the table. As this was an initial meeting, no decisions were made but many thoughts were shared. The consensus was that the counties should get together on occasion and toss around other ideas and see if they can help one another.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 PM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk