

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday February 20, 2007

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

Member of the Public: Harold Brown

A dedication ceremony was held in honor of Debra Naro and Charlie Barry as they were chosen as dedicatees for the 2006 Grafton County Annual Report. Bill Sahlman was also chosen a dedicatee but was unable to attend the ceremony as he was out of the country doing volunteer work. Copies of the report were given to them and a small reception with a continental breakfast was held in their honor.

Commissioner Cryans formally opened the meeting at 9:36 AM

Commissioner Burton had asked that someone from the County Attorney's Office be present at the meeting to address a concern about an invoice from Ricker's Funeral Home. Alison Farina was in attendance to address the questions.

Commissioner Burton said that he had been contacted regarding payment of an invoice from Ricker Funeral home and asked if there was anything in writing that states the County's obligation to pay certain bills. He also asked about whether or not state law addresses such issues and noted a bill that addressed how invoices from the Medical Examiner's Office are handled and paid in a more clear manner, is pending in the Legislature this session.

The invoice in question is a charge for \$240 for removal of a body, wherein travel to return it to the funeral home was approximately .8 miles, which the Attorney's office found to be out of line with what other funeral homes charge for transportation, and generally covers more miles. A. Farina said they only deal with one other funeral home that has a removal fee and that fee is only \$150.

There were further discussions about fees and how funeral homes are chosen, as well as the role of the Medical Examiner. It was noted that Ricker Funeral home was very frustrated with the payment procedure of the Medical Examiner in the state of NH.

Executive Director Clough had another bill from Ricker Funeral Home which included two charges that would not be paid via the County, but rather the state. Director Clough asked that A. Farina draft a letter to Ricker's informing them as to why those two charges would not be paid from the County, and to explain the procedure for paying invoices, and to copy her on the letter.

A. Farina said that after discussing the \$240 removal charge with Attorney St. Hilaire, it was decided that the invoice would be paid this time; however, a letter would be written to Ricker's Funeral Home stating that the County would only pay a fee of \$150 for the removal of a body in the future.

Commissioner Richards asked if writing a letter stating that information would cause a problem with Ricker's Funeral Home and Executive Director Clough said that it would in fact cause a problem and it may turn out that Ricker's would not service the County under those conditions.

Commissioner Richards then asked if the County would still be able to get service from somewhere and would that service cost more.

A. Farina said that there is a Funeral Home in Littleton and out of Lisbon that will service the County and although further away, the cost will be less.

Commissioner Burton then recommended that the County Attorney's Office send the letter and see what happens before taking any additional measures.

Commissioner Richards asked if Executive Director Clough had met with Register of Deeds Sharp last week regarding the charge/credit file system. Director Clough said that last week was difficult because of the snow storm and people not coming in, so she really didn't have a chance to go over a lot in detail but had reviewed a few things and said that B. Sharp was drafting a letter to contact some of the people who are in that file. She will meet with RD Sharp further to continue working on the issue.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the minutes from February 13, 2007, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Executive Director Clough gave an update on the NACo Prescription Drug Discount Plan for the month of January:

There were 404 users with an average savings of \$9.08 or 20.52% ~ Total savings for the month was \$3669.59. The total savings for the five months that we've offered the card is \$10,999.38 or 20.31%

Director Clough said Grafton County is running a higher usage rate than some of the larger Counties.

Commissioner Cryans said that much of the effort is due to J. Martino getting the cards out to people and that he was pleased to see the progress we're making, stating that if we continue on this track we should be able to see an annual savings of \$45K.

There were discussions about further ways to get information out to people.

The Commissioners signed a reply letter to an inmate who had sent them a letter in regard to issues he had. Per Supt. Libby, this inmate's issue has been addressed and there doesn't seem to be any further problems.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners of a letter that was received from an employee asking if the County could do something for the March of Dimes, such as sell sneakers or have a bake sale.

Director Clough recommended that the County sponsor a team to walk in the march, and buy tee shirts. She also said that this would work well in conjunction with the new program Human Resources is running which is a wellness program.

Commissioner Richards noted that County outreach is very important and that she supports doing something. Commissioner Burton agreed.

Commissioner Richard moved that the Commissioners support this endeavor and that a monetary amount of \$100 be donated to the March of Dimes and that the County provide tee shirts to sponsor the team and that the Commissioners themselves participate in the event, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton, who added that HRD Mann and her staff promote this as a wellness program. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough has received information from Maintenance Supt. Oakes that someone has been dumping their personal trash in the dumpster in the back of the Courthouse which is causing it to have to be emptied more often. He would like for a memo to go out to all those in the Courthouse stating that the dumpster is not to be used for personal trash. The Commissioners were all in agreement.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Richards asked why Coos County has two Nursing Homes and wondered if they have considered consolidating. Commissioner Burton said that at the time that they were building it/them, the population was higher and the need seemed to be there. Why they don't consolidate, he was not aware.

Commissioner Richards asked if the Board was supposed to be doing something about the MOU that NH Bolander brought in. Executive Director Clough said that she understood that the plan was to invite all three hazard regional directors in to talk about it. Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to see a better relationship with all the standing groups and not just a takeover of everything that they've already done. Executive Director Clough said that she thought that the MOU leaves the County open to a lot of financial expenses.

Commissioner Richards asked about the nursing help at the jail and its history. Executive Director Clough said that the jail does have some staff specifically dedicated to the jail, however when there is no coverage, nurses have to be called from the Nursing Home to either cover an emergency or to dispense medications. This has been an issue for quite some time and has created problems in another County which resulted in a Nursing Home deficiency because it leaves the Nursing Home short staffed.

Executive Director Clough said there will likely be additional expenses in the Dept. of Corrections fiscal year 2008 budget to address the nursing issues.

Commissioner Burton said that he would rather see resources put into rehabilitation treatment rather than into having more administrators, adding that the only administrator he would like to see is an Assistant to the Executive Director

Commissioner Burton asked about getting the IT person, to which Executive Director Clough said that this has been a difficult endeavor because of the diversity of the different Departments. Commissioner Cryans suggested perhaps looking into having a consultant look further into the issue to see if there could be recommendations made as to how this should proceed.

Commissioner Burton noted that there is a bill in the Senate (174) for a North County Development Authority. This would be a new authority that would assist the three County Economic Developments and bring in other revenue. The state will appropriate \$400K and the County is to contribute \$150K which would go towards staffing. The financing is to match other sources of money. Commissioner Burton said that he will be supporting the bill.

The Commissioners discussed the DRTC. Commissioner Cryans said that he thought that the research, science and everything else that was going on there was great. In speaking with Mark Scarano, Commissioner Cryans again asked that he do his best to keep the jobs in Grafton County, if not then at least regional and at the very least in the state.

Commissioner Burton asked if anyone had any special requests for information while he was attending the NACo Conference in Washington. Commissioner Cryans asked him to look in any information regarding Drug Courts and Commissioner Richards asked if he could keep his ears open for any rehabilitation programs and skills programs for the jail.

Commissioner Cryans noted that he spoke to Representative Hodes and offered him the use of an office here at the County should he be interested in holding office hours in the area.

Commissioner Cryans asked Commissioner Burton how DCI was doing and Commissioner Burton said that at present it remains open and he isn't aware of the current financial status other than that.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Mr. Brown and asked if he had any questions or concerns. Mr. Brown said that he was disappointed in the Executive Committee's vote on the beds needs for the proposed new Correctional Facility saying that he thought they didn't really have any authority there and that that decision should have been made at the Commissioners level.

Mr. Brown also questioned why it was verbally discussed that there is \$330K available for the rebuilding of a new storage barn when the audit report states that there is only \$195K. Executive Director Clough said that the \$195 refers to insurance money for equipment and belongings only but the building was insured for \$330K, of which no insurance money has been received.

Mr. Brown said that he wished that the proposed jail was a bit smaller and noted that he didn't hear anything about medical treatments there. Director Clough said that there will be a space available in the new building for medical treatment.

Mr. Brown said that he would also like to see a larger area for the skill training of inmates.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:04 AM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk