

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday April 17, 2007

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

PUBLIC PRESENT: Harold Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:15

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL:

Richard Thompson, Ruth Maffei and Sabra Carroll from the Employee Council arrived to discuss their proposals with the Board. The Council accepted the proposal of the Board for longevity, which would be to receive \$90 in FY08, \$95 in FY09 and reaching the requested \$100 in FY10. The Council said that they would hoped that the Commissioners could do a little better on the COLA as they would like to be able to reach 3.3% in order to stay current with the going rate.

The Commissioners left the room to discuss the COLA further. Upon their return, Commissioner Cryans informed the Council that the Board's final offer was 3.15%. The Employee Council then stepped out of the room. Upon their return, R. Thompson informed the Commissioners that 3.15% was not what they had wanted but agreed upon that figure with the stipulation that no resistance is met by the rest of the Employee Council.

Commissioner Burton commented that he believed that the Board of Commissioners had done their due diligence and to keep in mind that there will be a fairly hefty budget to present to the Delegation.

Funeral Directors from Grafton County arrived to discuss the problem of payment of invoices by the County, when pickups were made. Directors included: Peter Mayhew from Plymouth, Brian Gould from Woodsville, Dave Pollard from Pittsfield, Tom Mayo from Woodsville, Tammy Ross from Littleton, Todd Pillsbury from Littleton, Richard Fryer from Littleton and Cynthia Rogers from Bristol. County Attorney Rick St. Hilaire was present as well and was asked by the Commissioners to address the reasons everyone was here.

Prompted by the fact that some invoices from Funeral Homes have gone unpaid or have long waiting times prior to payment, Atty. St. Hilaire began by discussing how autopsies are determined and who can authorize them, which are the County Attorney, the Attorney General and HHS. The question then became determining who actually pays for the fee. Since there are various entities involved in the matter, many times the billing becomes somewhat confusing and inconvenient, particularly to the Funeral Directors. HB488 is a

bill that is set up to put all responsibility at the state level, however, it has been amended and that amendment, according to Atty. St. Hilaire, is being opposed by the Counties as it puts more financial responsibility on the Counties.

Since part of the problem is payment to the Funeral Homes, Commissioner Cryans asked the seated Directors if there were any outstanding payments owed to them. A few of the Directors said they were still waiting for payments and some said that payments had even been denied. Atty. St. Hilaire said that he would like a list of the unpaid bills and of those denied.

D. Pollard said that the amendment to HB488 solves the problem of the Funeral Directors getting paid, adding that although the bill may not be the best solution for the County, it addresses many of the concerns of the Funeral Homes. Mr. Pollard also said that most counties don't have any problem with paying but that doesn't seem to be the case with Grafton and that there have been a lot of complaints. Atty. St. Hilaire agreed that HB488 is quite acceptable for Funeral Directors but doesn't sit well with County Government.

There was some discussion as to the charges for a pickup, and whether or not they would be out of line, however, that was not a discussion for this forum.

Atty. St. Hilaire said that he would like to see some type of equitable solution to make sure that invoices are paid more quickly and paid in full. T. Ross said that she has been forced to make a conscious decision to decline the pickup of a body because she knows that she won't get paid, noting that it's very unfair to the loved ones and to the authorities, but that she just can't afford to continue to do so.

There was further discussions about the confusion between the billing from the Funeral Homes and how these bills gets diverted and again, not paid as an end result. Director Fryer reiterated the need for payments to be received within a 30 day period and that someone should be gracious enough to make sure those payments are made. It was also noted that a courtesy call would help when there is a delay in payment.

Commissioner Cryans thanked everyone for their time and for expressing their concerns. He also stated his faith in Attorney St. Hilaire's ability to assist in working to get this problem resolved.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the minutes from April 10, 2007, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough reviewed the March NACo Prescription Drug Report saying that we are still making good strides. There were 601 users in the month of March, saving over \$6706, for an average savings of \$11.16 or 22.91%.

Director Clough read a letter of retirement from Superintendent Libby, stating that because of the recent problems with the retirement systems, he would be retiring as of May 31, 2007.

The Commissioners are working on an agreement with Superintendent Libby that will keep him on as a part-time employee.

Commissioner Burton moved to accept the retirement of Supt. Libby, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Director Clough received an email from Karen Borgstrom from the Grafton County Bar Association who was requesting that the County pay for the refurbishing and glass top for a replacement table that will be put into the lawyers lounge. Approximate cost would be \$1000. Director Clough stated that she did not think it was the responsibility of the County to pay for refurbishing a table for the Bar Association. In further discussion it was decided that Director Clough would make the decision and handle it from there.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton said that his visitations to his town Select Boards have been going well so far and that there haven't been any major concerns from the towns.

Commissioner Cryans attended the Quality of Life Program awards and sat with a group from Grafton County. Though there were no winners from Grafton County, it was still a nice gathering and that HHS should be commended for pulling this program together.

The Executive Committee Meeting has been rescheduled for the 23rd due to the storm last Monday.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Mr. Harold Brown and asked if he had anything he would like to say. Mr. Brown noted that in reference to the law library in the Courthouse, he did not think that it should be closed to the public if they were not paying rent on it. This is an opinion that Mr. Brown has expressed in the past many times.

Mr. Brown also questioned the Drug Court and suggested that it was not going to do what was intentionally intended to do, which is to target those headed for the County Jail. He also noted that he did not think that there should be an elected official overseeing the Drug Court because of the chances of that position changing. In Mr. Brown's opinion there should be an appointed person overseeing the program. Mr. Brown also suggested that the district judges and courts should be involved with the program.

Commissioner Cryans said that he would like for Mr. Brown to give the Drug Court a chance before making any decisions about whether it will save money and target the proper people, stating that he has faith in the way it's planning to work.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:16 AM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk