

## GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners  
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.  
N. Haverhill, NH 03774  
Tuesday May 1, 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 9:04

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes from April 24, 2007, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to commend everyone who participated in County Day this year saying that it was one of the best we've had so far, noting that the weather was perfect for the day. Sec. Martino noted that we had received donations from local businesses for goods which included Agway, Railway Farm & Garden, Lyndonville Office Supply and Fitz-Vogt.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough presented a proposal for the Grant Administration for the Green Haven Feasibility study, which was submitted by Donna Lane for the lump sum amount of \$1400. There was only one proposal received. Director Clough recommended that the Commissioners accept the proposal.

Commissioner Burton moved to accept the proposal from Donna Lane, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

As per the Commissioners request, bids for the 2007 audit were advertised. The only response was from Mason & Rich, who has been doing the County audit for years. Their proposal was \$9569 for the County Audit, \$10,661 for the Nursing Home and \$3575 for the single audit, which is done because of the grants received. Director Clough said that the amounts were only up slightly from last year and recommended accepting the proposal of Mason & Rich.

Commissioner Richards moved to accept the bid proposal from Mason & Rich, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the letter of engagement with Mason & Rich for the years 2007 and 2008.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners that she received a letter from CDFA noting the approval of the \$400K rehabilitation grant for the building in Littleton

for Tri-County Cap Headstart, and KinderCenter, which is pending approval of the Governor and Executive Council.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners that the state has agreed to the 3% increase for their space at the Courthouse, which will begin on July 1, 2007. They have also added a clause that gives a two year extension and a 2% increase in the year 2010.

Commissioner Burton moved to accept the lease agreement and 3% increase, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Commissioner Burton for making the phone call which helped to prompt the acceptance of the recommended increase by the state.

The Commissioners signed the lease agreement with the state for the Superior Court.

Employee Council members Richard Thompson, Donna Wallis and Sabra Carroll arrived and informed the Commissioners that the Council had taken a vote and decided not to accept the 3.15% increase that was offered. There was also some serious concern about the wage increases to everyone in grades 6 & 7, because the County was trying to address a nursing shortage, and asked why everyone in those two grades was receiving an increase. D. Wallis noted that there were upgrades done just last year to those grades. Director Clough tried to clarify that saying that there were positions that received a double step increase last year but the positions were not upgraded. She added that what is happening this year is that the first two steps of grades 6 & 7 are being eliminated and there are two additional steps being added to the end.

Commissioner Cryans said that he was very surprised that the Employee Council was back as it was his understanding that the matter was settled and that the Board had not heard from the Council by the time they had made their final recommendations to the budget. R. Thompson said that it was difficult to get a meeting together in a short period of time but when they finally did gather, they decided unanimously not to accept the COLA of 3.15%.

It was noted that many of the positions in grades 6 & 7 had nothing to do with nursing and J. Martino noted that it had been said numerous times that adjustments to steps needed to be handled by the wage consultant company and that the Commissioners would accept their recommendations. No wage comparisons were done with all the other jobs in those two grades and yet it was being accepted for all. Commissioner Cryans said that you couldn't have it both ways as the wage consultant also recommended that the COLA be considerably less than what was being asked for and under that condition, the COLA shouldn't be above 3%. Martino said they were two separate issues.

In addressing the matter of grades 6 & 7, Commissioner Cryans said that the Board did what they believed was fair and that sometimes there are simply people who are lucky enough to be in the right place at the right time.

J. Martino spoke as a member of the Council and questioned why then, when the Commissioners made the decision to give a wage adjustment to the Correctional Officers and Dispatchers who were in grade 4 at the time, those people were pulled out of grade 4 and a new grade was created, thus not doing it for everyone in grade 4 as they had chosen to do now, noting that it did not seem fair at all, and suggested that perhaps a new grade be established for nursing which they are trying to benefit. There was no disagreement among the Council members that the Nurses should be paid more money.

There was no specific reason from the Commissioners as to why this was done this way and Commissioner Cryans noted the fact that in all that goes on, he really didn't remember how the grade 4 changes were handled, adding that the Board relies on the recommendations of the Department Head, Human Resources and Executive Director for guidance, but added that perhaps there was an error made.

J. Martino asked if that error could be corrected, however the Commissioners focused on the fact that the budget is going to be large and that selling it to the Delegation is going to be a difficult task. Commissioner Cryans noted that the Commissioners were the advocates for the Employees, working to negotiate the COLA. Commissioner Burton agreed that there were significant increases to the budget and that perhaps the public would not be terribly sympathetic to the requests for increases by the employees, saying that their (the public) take on it would be to look for a job elsewhere if they didn't like it.

Commissioner Cryans said that they felt that they had done the best that they could do in negotiating the COLA and that the Commissioners have already passed their recommendations for the budget and he suggested moving forward.

R. Thompson reiterated that the Employee Council has a problem with the fact that they have not received the proper COLA over the years and now the Commissioners have voted to make adjustments only to grades 6 & 7.

The Commissioners stepped out of the room for a private discussion. Upon their return Commissioner Cryans offered that the Board was willing to go to a 3.3% COLA however, they would like to alter their longevity offer, which was \$90-95-100 over the course of three years, to \$90-95-95 and \$100, over the course of four years.

The Employee Council stepped out but before doing so S. Carroll said that she understood the need for fiscal responsibility and that in the interest of that, it would be more responsible to take the Nurses out of grades 6 & 7 and not give that suggested increase to everyone. She also noted that there will never be a year when they won't be looking at an increased budget to where the County will be flush enough to give the proper COLA.

Upon the return of the Employee Council, R. Thompson said that they would agree to the 3.3% increase, and accept the \$90-\$95 longevity for two years; however they would like to revisit the longevity issue again on the third year and not agree to the \$95.

R. Thompson noted that he would like clarification on the adjustment to grades 6 & 7, to which Commissioner Cryans said that he needed to move forward with the meeting as he

had another group on the agenda but that the Council should put their concerns on paper and set another meeting to discuss the issue.

Commissioner Cryans did inform the Council that the health insurance rates have only increased by 1.5% this year, when the expectation was for 7.9%.

Commissioner Richards said she was not willing to renegotiate the longevity after the two years but would like to stick with the original new offer of a four year plan. After further discussion the Commissioners agreed to the longevity offer of \$90 for the first year, \$95 for the second and then a re-negotiation after that, along with a COLA increase of 3.3%.

Merrimack Register of Deeds, Kathi Guay and Grafton Register of Deeds, Bill Sharp arrived. After the introductions, RD Sharp said that he was looking for approval to be able to enter an agreement with Landata as their new online service provider in Deeds and deferred to RD Guay, who was asked to speak about her experiences as a Registry that is online with Landata.

RD Guay had been with Connor & Connor for 30 years when she decided to review other systems to see what was out there. In her opinion, C & C was not a very progressive company and she had looked at various systems, even other state's systems, before deciding on Landata, who was more sophisticated and had more features available. RD Guay discussed all the different features and time saving ways that Landata offered, noting also that the addition of a website also acts as a fine service to the public.

Commissioner Richards asked about the transition from C & C to Landata, which RD Guay said went fairly well. RD Guay noted that some features were too extensive for some of the patrons so the system had to be "dumbed down" a bit in order to appeal to all users. At present, the system is very user friendly.

RD Guay said that she did not receive good service from C & C as there are only four employees in the family run business.

Commissioner Richards asked why there are still so many other Counties using C & C. RD Guay was very candid when she said that there's a certain comfort level with doing what you've always done and change is scary sometimes. There is not a strong willingness to change the way things are being run.

In discussing costs, RD Guay said that it cost her \$156K a year to operate with C & C, which did not include a website, and they charged extra for every little thing they did. At present she has a 5 year lease with Landata, 39 Dell PC's plus a server, internet and e-record and that costs \$150K a year. All transactions are computerized with a receipt that prints out all the information that was processed at that time, including book and page. Support is always available to either user or staff and equipment is updated regularly at no extra cost.

Commissioner Burton asked how it works with dialup, to which RD Guay said it was slower, but no different than any other site when using dialup.

RD Sharp said that he would like to be able to go online with Landata on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August if approved. C & C would be given 60 days notice which would extend them to the 1<sup>st</sup> of Sept. RD Sharp said that he believed that he has done his best to explore the best way for Grafton County to go online and believes he's found that. He also noted how much easier it will be to prepare the budget as Landata will charge a constant fee of \$9500 a month.

RD Sharp said that he would like to be able to send two of his staff members to Texas for training. Landata would do training onsite as well as setting up a mock system for the public to work with to help them understand how it works.

Commissioner Cryans asked RD Guay that if she were currently in the beginning stages such as our Registry is, would she still choose to use Landata. RD Guay affirmed that she would and said that she is in the process of actually purchasing her equipment as opposed to leasing, as she is that comfortable with it.

Commissioner Richards asked if it made sense to go into a 5 year lease and RD Guay said that for her it didn't and that Landata will upgrade the purchased equipment at no additional charge. The cost to purchase turned out to be less than leasing for Merrimack.

Commissioner Cryans asked RD Guay if the support was adequate, to which she said that the equipment is tested for two weeks prior to arriving, then it's installed and the staff is trained. The installers stay with the staff until they're comfortable. Upgrades and corrections to the software can be made to the server remotely from Texas, at any time of the day or night with little or no interruptions.

Commissioner Cryans asked about the savings, to which RD Guay said that you get a more robust and functional system for less money, which speeds up the process and for those who use it, "time is money".

Commissioner Cryans asked about the error rate, which RD Guay said is less because of the non-redundancy, whereas with C & C, you are required to re-enter information over and over, thus creating the potential for more errors.

Commissioner Burton said that he appreciated RD Guay coming to Grafton County and going over all the information and explaining the system. The Commissioner then recommended that Executive Director Clough evaluate the system and bring forth a recommendation. He would also like the local Landata representative to come in and talk with the Commissioners.

Executive Director Clough had a couple of questions for RD Sharp. She asked if he would chose to go with a five year lease, to which he said yes. She asked if there would be a lock-in of \$9500 a month for that five year period, to which he said yes. She asked if there were any up front costs, to which he said that he didn't think there were. She asked if the marginal note issue would still be so time consuming,

to which he said no, that it would cut that time down considerably. Director Clough then asked what would happen with the account/credit file, to which RD Sharp said that it would go into the billing system and be brought up to date. Lastly Director Clough asked how you prevent user confusion, to which RD Sharp replied that he will hold an open house with a mock system where people can come in and learn how to use it. In the mean time, people can also get a good idea of what it's going to look like and operate like by going to the Merrimack website.

Commissioner Richards noted that she had received a call from someone regarding the change and asked if Landata has access to a title company. RD Guay said that Landata's parent company is Steward Information Systems. Landata has over reaching areas but can not do anything else with that information.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Mr. Brown and asked him if he had any questions, to which he asked how much staff has been cut do to the efficiency of the new technology and RD Guay said that 2.5, soon to be 3 people. They went from 12 down to 10, but there is a 100% increase in production. Mr. Brown then added that there should be no 3<sup>rd</sup> party information sharing.

Commissioner Cryans thanked RD Guay for coming.

The Commissioners signed the warrant for the yield tax levy for Livermore.

The Commissioners signed the CDFR MicroCredit grant paperwork.

Commissioner Richards asked how the money was holding out and Director Clough said not well and that they may have to get into a CD. Commissioner Richards asked if that has happened before and Director Clough said no, they just seemed to be going through a lot of money lately. There may be a need to borrow money this year.

Commissioner Richards asked what the status of the Master Plan was and Director Clough said that she had the draft but has not had a chance to review it yet.

Executive Director Clough said that she has revised the budget to reflect the lower health insurance increase, which has reduced it by \$173K or down to a 20.44% tax increase. It will have to be revised again to reflect the new COLA change.

Director Clough asked the Commissioners if they thought that the timbercut that was mentioned by Forester Parr should go into the budget revenue. There was some discussion and the decision was to add it in as \$20K revenue.

Executive Director Clough said that two meetings were held for the programming for the jail and they had gone very well and managed to cut \$10M off the projected initial costs. It was suggested that perhaps they should look into a Construction Manager come this summer. Commissioner Cryans asked if the intent was to look into building a green facility, to which Director Clough said that they weren't that far in the process yet but it is definitely in the forefront of everyone's mind as a way to go.

Commissioner Richards attended both meetings and agreed that they were very productive, noting that Supt. Libby had a number of his staff there who were very insightful.

The Jail Steering Committee will be meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00

Commissioner Richards said that she had a discussion with Representative Aguiar who suggested that the Farm find a way to use some of the blow down from the last storm as bedding for the cows. Director Clough said that if the trees were on private land, which most were, then there really is no way to work that out, plus the Farm doesn't own a chipper or have the manpower to handle the job.

Mr. Brown was recognized again and said that he didn't understand why the County doesn't just do an across the board pay raise and make it fair to all. Doing a percentage raise always give the higher paid people more money than the lower paid people.

Mr. Brown also stated that jail site meetings should be made public. Director Clough said that they are not public meetings but rather work sessions. Mr. Brown said that if public money is being spent then those meetings should be open to the public. Mr. Brown asked if minutes were being taken to which Director Clough said no, because they are planning sessions.

Mr. Brown also stated that the Drug Court is not doing what the Commissioners originally proposed that it do, and that local Court systems should also be involved in the process. Mr. Brown also said that he did not agree that elected officials should be running the program as they are can be changed out, thus possibly resulting in a changed program. He said that the program is built on personalities, i.e. the County Attorney, and that the program needs to target the lower level offenders and that the County should just throw more money at it to get it going quicker. Mr. Brown also voiced his opinion that people should not be thrown in jail for personal drug use.

Commissioner Cryans asked Mr. Brown to wait and see what happens with Drug Court.

The next Commissioner meeting will be held at Alumni Hall on May 8, 2007 at 6:00 PM

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 AM

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Raymond S. Burton, Clerk