

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Lisbon Regional School

Lisbon, NH

Monday October 23, 2006

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, Ray Burton and William Gabler, Executive Director Julie Clough, Sheriff Doug Dutile, Superintendent of Corrections Glenn Libby, Human Resource Director Joanne Mann, Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander, County Attorney Rick St. Hilaire, Register of Deeds Joel Dupuis and Secretary Jeri Martino.

GUEST: Harold Brown, Superintendent of Schools Patrick Lowe, Social Studies Teacher Emory Younkens and many students of all grades from Lisbon Regional School.

Commissioners Cryans and Gabler were attending a Clergy Breakfast at the Grafton County Nursing Home. Commissioner Burton was present and Music Teacher Cheryl LaFond presented one of her students, Chantelle Vienneau who had prepared three songs to sing to the group. Commissioners Cryans and Gabler arrived during the first song, which was called "May I Be a Hero", which was followed by "Much More", from The Fantastics, and lastly we heard a beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful"

Commissioner Cryans called the meeting to order at 9:26 AM and said that the group was very pleased to be in Lisbon, praised Ms. Vienneau for her wonderful voice and thanked both she and Ms. LaFond for the musical presentation. Commissioner Cryans then turned the meeting over to Commissioner Burton to say a few words.

Commissioner Burton recognized Social Studies teacher, Emory Younkens, and thanked him for all the preparation that was done prior to our coming, pointing out the back wall which was displayed with information regarding County Government, which had been done by the students. Commissioner Burton recognized Principal Bob Butson and Superintendent of Schools, Patrick Lowe, whom he asked to say a few words.

Dr. Lowe gave a brief overview of growing up in Michigan, attending school there and then moving East where he eventually ending up coaching then teaching and lastly becoming an administrator. Dr. Lowe said his door was always open to anyone having questions.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Jeri Martino for her work on creating the Grafton County website and Executive Director Clough for her operation of the County and it's nearly 400 employees.

Commissioner Gabler moved to approve the minutes of October 16, 2006, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners of an invitation to an open house at the Child Advocacy Center on November 6th from 9:30 – 10:30.

The Commissioners signed a letter that is being sent to Judge Lynn regarding keeping Grafton County Superior Court Judge Jean Burling in Grafton County.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners of a request from the Nursing Home regarding an employee who is currently at max for vacation time and is requesting to have some of that vacation time paid, rather than taking it off as it would create a lack of coverage. This request was supported by DON Shields and Administrator Bolander, however, Executive Director Clough said that she had reservations about allowing time to be paid and recommends that earned time be extended rather than being paid out as it would tend to set a precedence. Human Resource Director Mann agreed that it was a better solution to extend the vacation time. Commissioner Gabler was in agreement saying that it was probably not the best idea to set the precedence.

Commissioner Burton asked how many nursing position are currently open, to which HRD Mann said that there were three open and two that were pending. Commissioner Burton then asked how many were traveling nurses to which the answer was one traveler and one coming. Commissioner Burton asked if there were any employees that were seeking higher education in nursing and NHA Bolander said there were some, not many, but that between FMLA and the vacancies, they were currently having a difficult time with staffing.

Register of Deeds Dupuis spoke and said that the problem was not only with the Nursing Home and that he too was having that difficulty in his department with people bumping up against max hours and then ending up being short staffed because of time taken.

The decision was to extend the vacation hours for the nursing home employee, yet Commissioner Cryans requested that the Executive Director and HRD Mann do some further investigating into alternate possibilities in the future.

The Department Heads were asked to give a brief introduction and to speak about their Departments.

COUNTY ATTORNEY ~ Rick St. Hilaire, Elected position – 2 years

Attorney St. Hilaire began by recognizing Manchester, New Hampshire Police Officer Michael Briggs, who was recently killed in the line of duty, and asked for a moment of silence to honor this fallen law officer.

Atty. St. Hilaire informed the attendees that his position has many names throughout the Country, including District Attorney and that he is the chief law enforcement authority in the County. To become a prosecuting attorney requires a college degree and three years of law school. Atty. St. Hilaire stated that doing work for others and public service is both rewarding and fulfilling.

Atty. St. Hilaire spoke briefly about the Child Advocacy Center saying that it was a collaborative effort between Grafton County, Sullivan County and Dartmouth Hitchcock to create an environment where children can feel comfortable about telling their story as a victim, one time only, which is videotaped, and then not having to repeat the story numerous times, which can cause trauma to the child. The video is then distributed to the different agencies who may require them.

Atty. St. Hilaire talked briefly about the Drug Court saying that it will deal with repeated drug offenders and participants will receive intensive treatment and rehabilitation.

Attorney St. Hilaire gave the students his email address and invited anyone interested to come to the Courthouse for a tour.

SUPERINTENDENT OF CORRECTIONS ~ Glenn Libby

Supt. Libby began by talking about the two different types of inmates at the jail, pre-trial who are awaiting trial, and those who are sentenced to one year or less. The Jail houses 75 – 80 inmates with the current population of 106. There were as many as 150 this summer. Supt. Libby said that 85-90% of the inmates are there because of drugs.

Supt. Libby discussed some of the programs including Thresholds and Decisions and work release programs. At present the inmates are spending time distributing Farm grown foods to some of the food pantries around the area.

Supt. Libby suggested that the students, if given the opportunity, participate in the Operation Impact program, wherein they tour the jail and hear firsthand from inmates how they came to be there and what life is like for them.

Job opportunities are available and the age requirement was just lowered to 18. There is a four week academy to become certified and the Supt. stated that it was a rewarding career.

REGISTER OF DEEDS ~ Joel Dupuis, Elected position – 2 years

RD Dupuis began by saying that in his opinion, Grafton County is a great place to work and that his position as Register of Deeds is an elected one. The Register of Deeds is responsible for all the land records in Grafton County dating back to 1773, and that Grafton County is just one of the ten registries in the state.

RD Dupuis stated that at present, foreclosures are up but that the economy is cyclical in nature and always seems to come back.

RD Dupuis stated that he was opposed to putting records online because of the chance of identity theft.

A student asked Register Dupuis after seeing the budget, how money was raised, to which he answered that money comes in though fees paid and the real estate transfer tax is 1.5%, noting though that approximately \$1M goes to the state per month.

HUMAN RESOURCE DIRECTOR ~ Joanne Mann

HRD Mann began by saying that she has worked in many different departments within the County and is currently the Director of Human Resources, which is a fairly new department. There are over 100 different job descriptions for County employment and it is a very diverse employment population, with many career opportunities.

At present, LNA, LPN and RN's are the most difficult positions to fill. HRD Mann stated that she uses newspapers, radio, the County website and dot com sites dedicated to finding jobs as well as trade journals to advertise employment.

Prior to employment with the County there are numerous screening and background checks as

well as drug tests and checks on Medicare/Medicaid fraud.

Once a person is hired with the County, a three day orientation takes place wherein one learns about County policies, benefits and if necessary, the operation of special equipment.

The Human Resources Department tracks workman's comp. and employee absences, monitors evaluations, encourage employee recognition and improved work performance, resolve disputes and works as an advocate. Continuing education is stressed and retirement counseling is available.

At present HRD Mann is either working on or has worked on developing a drug and alcohol policy, upgrading job descriptions, shopping for insurance and looking into a supervisor retreat.

NURSING HOME ADMINISTRATOR ~ Eileen Bolander

NHA Bolander began by asking the students how many of them had ever been in a nursing home, to which there were quite a few raised hands.

Out of the almost 400 Grafton County employees, 225 work in the nursing home in many different capacities. There is a laundry, dietary dept., housekeeping, and administrative offices. There are 130 residents who rely on all of these employees for most of their personal needs. NHA Bolander noted that healthcare is the second most regulated field in the US, second only to the nuclear field. Healthcare is the number one growing need for jobs in the US and the Correctional field is second. NHA Bolander stated that working in a nursing home is a very responsible job with requires that a background investigation be done.

It surprised everyone to hear that one in four people will live in a nursing home.

Grafton County is the only nursing home in the state of NH that uses PDA's. Grafton County Nursing Home received high accolades for being deficiency free in the last state survey.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT ~ High Sheriff Doug Dutile

The Sheriff informed the students that he had twenty-seven years of law enforcement experience and seventeen of those years were with Grafton County. Sheriff Dutile asked the students if anyone knew exactly what the responsibility of the Sheriff's Department was, to which one astute student replied; transporting prisoners, operating dispatch, and assisting other police departments, which were all correct. Other responsibilities include the transport of prisoners, retrieving fugitives and serving subpoenas and court orders.

Sheriff Dutile noted that the Dispatch Center serves 63 agencies and is staffed with a minimum of two full time employees. One 911 call is received every three minutes.

The Sheriff informed the students that if anyone was interested there is a shadow program available where you can ride along with the deputies. Minimum age to become a law enforcement agent is 21 and certification is needed.

Commissioner Cryans thanked Mr. Younkens for being the facilitator for this meeting and for having the students so well prepared. He also commented on how attentive everyone was.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Mr. Brown who said a few words about the importance of the Bill of Rights and noted how strongly he felt about the Second Amendment's Right to Bear Arms, but also noted that many of our civil rights are continually being challenged.

Mr. Brown also stressed that people, particularly younger people, should stay away from drugs, which was also pointed out by other Department heads earlier.

Mr. Younkins thanked the Commissioners and all the Department Heads for coming to the school.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:15 AM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk