

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday April 1, 2008

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

Commissioner Cryans called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM

Commissioner Richards moved to approve the minutes from March 25, 2008, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. Changes were made. All were in favor.

EMPLOYEE COUNCIL: Steve Whitney, Donna Wallis and Richard Thompson, who was sitting in for Sabra Carroll, arrived. There was some discussion as to why S. Carroll could not attend. Commissioner Burton said that Employee Council and Union members should be allowed to attend meetings. Director Clough will follow up regarding the circumstances.

In reply to the Commissioners counter proposal of a 2.5% Cost of Living increase, S. Whitney said that the Employee Council will be sticking to their request of 4.3%, noting the increases in expenses. There was a discussion as to what the financial impact would be. R. Thompson said that it is black and white as to what the actual cost of living is and that's where they will sit.

Commissioner Cryans reiterated that employees are already likely to get a 3% merit increase in most instances and a cost of living will increase that amount. He also noted that Dartmouth would be doing away with their cost of living increases due to economic concerns

D. Wallis said that there are some people who are maxed out on the pay scale and many of those are lower paying jobs. She also said that in regard to those who are maxed out on the wage scale, there has already been a precedence set by the Commissioners who gave bonuses to some of those people.

R. Thompson said that with the increase to health insurance, those at the bottom of the pay scales are not seeing much of increase anyway.

Commissioner Burton said that with all that's going on, the lights aren't blinking too bright with the Delegation. Being an election year, he said, they have to be conservative going into this budget. He added that public employment is very good and he didn't see how the Commissioners could agree to the Employee Council's request.

S. Whitney said that he understood the need for the jail to be built and said that there was some "politicking" going on about it. He said that he was representing the Employee Council in this request and that they would remain steadfast at 4.3%. He said that it is a two way street and though he didn't mean any disrespect he would understand that the

Commissioners will do what they have to do. He said that on behalf of both the jail and the nursing home, these people need the increase.

Commissioner Richards said that she wished she could be all things to all people but sometimes that just can't happen.

The Employee Council left.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough requested a double step increase for one of her staff members who she said is doing an excellent job and has put forth a huge amount of effort into her work.

Commissioner Richards said that she had mixed feelings about monetarily compensating employees who should already be doing an exemplary job and more, which is what they should be expected to do. Director Clough said that she did not agree with that opinion.

Commissioner Burton moved approval of the double step increase, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

NURSING HOME BUDGET: NHA Eileen Bolander, Intern Craig Labore and Finance Manager Bryan Patanovich arrived to present the budget.

E. Bolander began with a request for HMI Robbins to attend an out of state conference in MA, which she has attended every year.

Commissioner Richards moved approval of the out of state travel, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

According to projected revenues, the NH is looking to increase its revenue 3.5% and that is based on a census of 130 and more Medicare and private pay residents.

Noting the fact regarding Medicare and private pay residents, Commissioner Cryans asked if the NH is fulfilling its mission. NHA Bolander said yes, but what is happening is that some of the Medicaid people are being kept in the community longer now.

Commissioner Burton asked what the increase was for the whole NH budget, which is \$920,373 or an increase of less than 10%.

Director Clough said that the capital reserve fund, which showed a balance according to the budget presented, needed to be zeroed out as there is no money left in that fund.

Dietary wages have increased \$69K and there was a discussion about competitive bids for food services. NHA Bolander had gotten prices from three vendors, including Fitz Vogt and recommended them for many reasons, including their history with the county.

Commissioner Richards asked if the help in Dietary is enough to be able to use the fresh farm vegetables and NHA Bolander said not really and that produce would have to be used fresh as there is no storage and no way to keep the items.

The Commissioners approved NHA Bolander contracting with Fitz-Vogt for another two years.

There was a discussion about the food supply line and whether it was figured properly.

There was a discussion about the capital reserve fund and how it was established and funded. Director Clough said that originally it was funded by the pro-share money and there was \$1M that they had hoped to use to offset the first bond payment, which at the time was statutorily not feasible, so the account then became the equipment purchase account, which has now been used up.

Commissioner Richards said that she was a proponent of the capital reserve account and questioned whether or not it would be a good idea to continue with one. Director Clough said not this year with a decline in the overall fund balance, she wouldn't recommend it. NHA Bolander said she would prefer to have a capital reserve fund but acknowledged that she viewed it differently than the Executive Director.

Director Clough asked if there were any new staff positions and B. Patanovich said that he had budgeted to increase his 20 hour administrative position to 32 hours. This would still not require benefits.

Commissioner Cryans asked if there was anywhere in the budget that could be cut back, or perhaps somewhere revenue could be increased. B. Patanovich said that they try to do their best to look at every piece of revenue and NHA Bolander said that you can't really compromise on the value of what the NH offers. They would however do some re-reviewing.

Commissioner Burton asked what would happen if there were an increase of ten rooms somewhere on the complex, suggesting in the Admin Building. NHA Bolander said that it would be extremely costly as there aren't ten rooms that would currently qualify.

Commissioner Burton asked how security was in the NH and NHA Bolander said that there was some concern but much is being worked out by committees.

DRUG COURT: Bob Gasser arrived to go over his budget and gave a brief report of the current session saying there were originally 11 participants and 3 have gone to prison (women). 3 will graduate in January (1 male, 2 females) and 3 have been proposed to enter the program. B. Gasser said they could take 20 under the current budget.

Commissioner Cryans asked if there was anything the Commissioners could do to encourage more participation and B. Gasser said that there are specific guidelines set up by the County Attorney regarding participation and that sometimes, people actually reject

the program because it's too hard. Commissioner Burton inferred that he would lobby the County Attorney for more participation.

The Drug Court budget has decreased 6.9%. Non-profit organizations are working to raise \$10K for the program which goes toward rewards for participants. Participants also pay to be in the program.

11:50 AM Commissioners broke for lunch

12:30 PM Commissioners returned from lunch

Director Clough presented a GCEDC budget request in the amount of \$50K, which is the same as last year's request, which was increased \$25K from the year prior to accommodate a part time loan officer.

Commissioner Cryans spoke in favor of the funding saying it was money well spent. Commissioner Burton said that he would like to see the level of activity of the new loan officer, and how much in the way of loans has come from that hiring. Commissioner Burton said that he supports the \$50K request citing DCI.

Corrections Superintendent Libby arrived to present two requests to the Commissioners. The first was request for approval for someone who needs to spend two days in jail for traffic violations in order to qualify for enlistment in the military. The violations come from another state but the incarceration can be done in any facility. Supt. Libby said that this has been done in the past and a stipend is paid from the person for his stay.

Commissioner Burton moved approval for the two night stay, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Supt. Libby requested out of state travel for his Medical Coordinator for training in Maine, which will result in her being becoming certified to test for Hepatitis- C and HIV.

Commissioner Burton moved approval for the out of state travel, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Supt. Libby said that he had received a letter from D. Robie regarding the 4-H sheep shearing that is done at the County every year, wherein she voiced her concern that someone from UNH had questioned her on whether or not she had gone through all the proper channels to be able to hold this event this year. Supt. Libby just wanted to assure her that no further requirements, such as asking approval from the Board of Commissioners, were needed in order to hold the event. The Commissioners didn't see any reason to require anything further or additional to how it had been done every year and supported the event. The sheep shearing event will be held on May 17th.

*12:32 PM – Commissioner Richards moved to enter into Executive Session as per RSA 91-A:3, Paragraph II, Section e). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

*1:40 PM – Commissioner Burton moved to come out of Executive Session and to permanently seal the Minutes from the Session. Commissioner Richards seconded the motion. All were in favor. No motions were made and no actions were taken while in Executive Session.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that Financial Advisor D. Ranaghan has suggested that the County adopt a fund balance policy which states that the primary purpose in establishing and maintaining this goal (unreserved balances in the General Fund) is to stabilize future tax rate increases and to have the funds necessary to mitigate current and future risks. The Grafton County Commissioners will endeavor to achieve and maintain an undesignated fund balance with a goal of 5% to 8% to be reviewed annually. This policy is boiler plate and is used in other Counties.

Commissioner Burton moved to agree to adopt this policy, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Director Clough presented a letter from the town of Thornton which stated that the town members had asked the Board of Selectman to write a letter to Sen. Reynolds, Rep. Matheson and Councilor Burton, with a copy to the Grafton County Commissioners, voicing their opposition to the jail vote and the way the vote was handled.

The Commissioners signed a drawdown request for the Littleton Area Learning Center.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that LGC has placed a retirement cost calculator on their website which determines payments by Counties should HB1645 passes. It has currently passed the house and is in the senate.

If passed in 2010 Grafton County will pay:	\$ 34,250
In not passed,	\$407,620

Commissioner Burton said there is no question about what should be done. Director Clough said that if there is a letter to be sent, it needs to be done by Friday. She will prepare something for the local Senators.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners of a letter that was received from NHA Bolander and DoN Shields, with a copy to the Joint Loss Committee, regarding the fact that two more employees had fallen in the parking lot. The letter went on to complain about the fact that there has not been an adequate amount of salt and sand put on the parking lot.

Director Clough said that there are three large parking lots on the property and there have been no other incidents other than those at the Nursing Home.

Commissioner Cryans said that we will probably make it through this winter and maybe the issue can be addressed for next year. Director Clough said the matter will be taken up with the Joint Loss Committee.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton attended the Glencliff annual sugaring off party, which is the only state operated maple sugar house.

Commissioner Burton will be attending the Spring/Summer downtown merchant association event on April 19th.

Commissioner Burton attended the funeral for Sgt. D. Stelmat of Bethlehem saying it was very well attended.

Commissioner Richards said that she had spoken to H. Hatch, D. Ward and M. Lunak and they had some interesting suggestions for educational projects for the Farm. She suggested they come and speak with the Commissioners in a non public session and talk about their ideas adding that the conversation would most likely include a discussion regarding personnel. Director Clough said that she didn't feel that it was appropriate for Mr. Hatch be involved in a non public session to discuss Grafton County personnel. Commissioner Cryans said the matter should be tabled for later.

Commissioner Cryans said that he and B. Gasser had gone to their first New England Association of Drug Courts professional board of directors meeting in Framingham MA where thirteen people represented the New England states. He said that B. Gasser will be a real asset to the group. He and B. Gasser will also be on WNTK this evening.

Commissioner Burton asked where the Landata issues stood. Commissioner Cryans asked how quickly Landata could transition if chosen. Director Clough said that B. Ruggles had secured references and it appeared that all those who made the Landata transition had very good experiences, which transpired over a weekend.

Commissioner Richards said that she would like to make sure there would be a smooth transition and user interface.

Commissioner Burton said that he was very bothered by the "donkey tailed" bills that were sent out from Connor & Connor.

Commissioner Cryans said he was concerned about Connor & Connor's 25% fee charge.

There was further discussion as to when the decision should be made. Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to give the public the opportunity to meet with the Commissioners if they were interested in doing so, prior to making a decision. Director Clough will invite everyone back on the 8th of April.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 PM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk