

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Tuesday November 27, 2007

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

PUBLIC: Harold Brown

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting at 9:10 AM

Supt. Libby arrived.

David Minnis from 379 Group, a Marketing Company, arrived and was introduced by Commissioner Richards. Commissioner Richards had invited Mr. Minnis to give the Board information on his public relations business, as she thought that having a PR representative would help promote the decision to approve the new jail.

Mr. Minnis thanked the Board for the invitation then went on to say that his business would be able help to frame the issue of the jail and gain approval from the Selectboards, taxpayers and the Delegation.

In his opinion, the County had an uphill battle and he said that right now there were critical issues in the state regarding things such as education, Medicare part D and the retirement system, all which trickle down to the taxpayers. Some of the things he suggested doing was framing the issue and putting together a package of historical information. This information would then be marketed in a professional way that was geared to the people that the County is trying to reach, and tailored to the demographics of the area.

Commissioner Richards asked what would be the first thing he would do, to which Mr. Minnis said that that he would put together a newsletter in historical order that chronicled the details leading up to the present with mailings to selectman and towns, which will help to gain momentum and interest. He also discussed having 8-10 letters ready to send to editors of local papers and having interviews.

Director Clough said that there have been numerous interviews with the Superintendent already.

Mr. Minnis said that he would also like to make individual contact with the Delegates.

Commissioner Burton said that Mr. Minnis comes highly qualified and asked what other clients he has with this new company. Mr. Minnis said that the 379 Company was very new but named many other clients that he had with his other company.

Commissioner Burton said that in his opinion the vote is in pretty good shape and that by his count it would pass. He said that to stir up the Legislative group would put more of a

negative spin on things, rather than a positive and that you may run the risk of losing votes. He added that he did not see a reason to pursue this avenue.

Mr. Minnis said that if by chance in the future, it appeared that the County did need the help of 379, he would come back under a “crisis management” situation.

Commissioner Cryans agreed with Commissioner Burton and said that he wasn’t ready to stir anything up either.

There was some discussion as to why the Jan/Feb date was chosen for the bond vote.

Mr. Minnis asked if there was an alternative plan if for some reason the Delegation wasn’t ready to vote at that time.

Commissioner Cryans said that both the Executive Committee and the Delegation have been kept in the loop all along the process and both the Chair and Vice Chair sit on the Steering Committee, so he didn’t think there was any need for an alternate plan. The vote will be put out there for a decision at that time. The Commissioner added that the 379 Firm may be called upon in the future and it’s good to know that they’re out there if needed.

Commissioner Richards asked Supt. Libby how he felt about the situation and he replied that most of the suggestions made by Mr. Minnis have already been and continue to be done, and echoed the sentiments of Commissioner Cryans that it’s good to know that 379 is there if needed.

The Commissioners thanked Mr. Minnis for coming and wished him good luck.

Director Clough asked the Board what they needed to help them make a decision as to what to do with the existing jail.

Commissioner Burton said that he would like to see a complete demolition and removal and would like to know that cost to do that.

Commissioner Richards said that maybe it could be used as storage and or rehabilitated into something somewhere in the future.

Commissioner Cryans said that he wasn’t keen on putting money into trying to shore up the back side of the building if that what is needed to keep it standing.

Director Clough said that they also need to have a discussion to explore the bond issue adding that they need to consider the future needs of the County while considering the bond. Commissioner Cryans suggested contacting the Dean from the Tuck school to see if they might have someone there who can look into the matter and offer suggestions.

Deb Naro and Shelly Golden from Communities for Alcohol and Drug-free Youth (CADY) arrived to present the Commissioners with a presentation about the Restorative Justice Program. Restorative Justice is a new way of looking at crime that focuses on repairing the harm to the victim. Through the process, youth offenders are held accountable, develop empathy for the victim, and make amends. Youths between the ages of 13 and 17 are eligible.

Human Services Director Nancy Bishop, Supt. Libby, Attorney St. Hilaire and Drug Court Coordination Bob Gasser were also in attendance.

D. Naro discussed the program and the process that takes place, which is modeled after a program in Belknap County. At present there are five graduates of the program. The program is both restorative and educational in nature. A Video named "Broken Windows" was played which showed how the restorative program worked in Vermont.

After the video, Commissioner Richards asked about eligibility, to which S. Golden said that they receive referral from schools, police departments and the courts. The program is for first offenders and is voluntary. There is a prescreening process which assesses skills and needs.

Commissioner Cryans asked if parental involvement was required and S. Golden said they would *like* the parents to be involved but it is not mandatory. Often times a close family member will be involved.

Commissioner Burton asked if the offender is there because of crimes to property to which D. Naro answered yes. The Commissioner then asked if there is any paperwork which will follow these youths in the future, to which the answer was no.

Commissioner Burton suggested visiting jails and DCYF, then asked D. Naro what she do with \$50K, to which she said that she would hope to be up to 25 kids a year and that she would look to widening the territory and making S. Golden's position full time.

B. Gasser said that at present he has 11 people currently in the Drug Court which was initiated by the Commissioners.

Attorney St. Hilaire thanked the Commissioners for inviting the folks from CADY in and than asked D. Naro where the County savings are since the money is allocated through the State. D. Naro said she wasn't sure but could look into that.

Attorney St. Hilaire then asked how this program fit in overall and asked if the plan was to take the juvenile justice system in a different direction. D. Naro said that the current intent was to work in partnership with the system but also to act as a stand alone program with an educational level that the courts are unable to provide.

B. Gasser asked what relationship the courts have with the program, to which D. Naro said that it's more of a referral program which is not mandated. B. Gasser then asked if

there is a treatment component and whether or not they try to identify the problems. D. Naro said that referrals are made but CADY does not mandate treatment. S. Golden said that she works closely with the domestic violence center as often times there is violence in the family.

Commissioner Burton said that he would like to see some of the success stories get front page coverage in the local papers.

Supt. Libby said that he applauded the efforts, adding that education is very important in any preventive or restorative program and the more people they can affect will mean less possibility that the jail will see them in the future.

H. Brown said that he found the information very interesting and suggested staying with people no matter how difficult they can be, adding that "it's easy to love the easy ones, but you've got to love the hard ones too". Mr. Brown also said that the "shame" factor of what someone has done is a big deterrent.

D. Naro said that they are still looking for further funding. The Commissioners thanked everyone for coming.

11:30 AM the Commissioners broke for lunch.

12:27 PM the Commissioners resumed their meeting.

Commissioner Burton moved approval of the minutes from November 20, 2007, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. Changes were made. All were in favor

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

The Commissioners signed a drawdown request and warrant for the Gile project CDBG grant.

The Commissioners reviewed and signed an amendment to the mortgage and an amendment to the assignment for the Gile project.

The first quarter drug rebate was received from the state in the amount of \$4950

An email was received from a visiting professor at Dartmouth who would like to visit with the Commissioners regarding County policy. A date will be set up.

There will be no meeting on December 4th.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Burton recommended that K. Luce be made aware of the Barbara B. Hill Fund(s).

Commissioner Burton suggested that the questions that were asked at the last jail information meeting, be answered at the meeting in Lincoln.

Commissioner Burton asked Director Clough to provide him with a report of the revenue of the Farmstand this year.

Commissioner Cryans said that there will be a meeting at Lebanon College at 5:30 for the Drug Court wherein donations will be used to buy incentives for participants.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:25 PM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk