

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Office of the Commissioners
3855 Dartmouth College Hwy.
N. Haverhill, NH 03774
Wednesday January 7, 2009

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

OTHERS: Harold Brown, Selectman Daryl Brown

Commissioner Cryans called the meeting to order at 10:16 AM after all County elected officials had been sworn in at 9:15 AM at the Courthouse by Judge Peter Bornstein. A reception was held directly after that for friends and family.

The first order of business was for the Board to reorganize for the next two years.

Commissioner Burton moved to appoint Commissioner Cryans as the Chair of the Board, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Commissioner Burton moved to appoint Commissioner Richards as the Vice Chair of the Board, which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. All were in favor.

Commissioner Richards moved to appoint Commissioner Burton as Clerk of the Board which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. All were in favor.

Newly elected Treasurer Vanessa Sievers was in attendance and Commissioner Cryans asked her to give a brief introduction. She said that she is a junior at Dartmouth College and has been involved in New Hampshire politics for the last two years. Her home away from New Hampshire is Montana and she said that she is looking forward to her position with the County.

Commissioner Burton welcomed Treasurer Sievers and outlined in brief, what the responsibilities of Treasurer are. He suggested that she read of her NH duties under the law. He also requested that her signature stamp remain in the building at all times and added that all bills should be paid regularly after being cleared by the Commissioners. He also suggested that when appointing a Deputy Treasurer, that person be someone local and that she work closely with Director Clough.

Commissioner Cryans also welcomed Treasurer Sievers and said that he understood that it was probably a very exciting time for the new Treasurer. He said that he was confident that she would do a good job and also suggested that she take advantage of Director Clough's expertise. Commissioner Cryans said that the Board of Commissioners work well as a group for the benefit of the people of the County of Grafton. He said that they all want her to do well.

Commissioner Cryans asked her to get herself a NH cell phone for ease of business and he too wished her good luck. Commissioner Burton suggested that that County should pay for the cell phone given that it will be used for County business.

Commissioner Richards asked if the County has ever gone outside of New Hampshire to invest money and Director Clough said that as far back as she can remember, it has always been invested in the County and thought that there may be a statute to that affect, however, after checking Director Clough found that you could invest outside of New Hampshire.

Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander arrived to give her report and said that the Nursing Home is full with a census of 135.

The Nursing Home will sponsor a County employee and resident taste testing contest for recipes that can be converted into large quantities for the Nursing Home. The winning recipes will be added to the menu and the purpose of the contest is to improve the menu and to entice more people to eat there.

The Nursing Home received a five out of five star rating.

NHA Bolander said that that Carroll County's Nursing Home building committee will be visiting on the 23rd of January and invited the Commissioner to come over if they wished.

Housekeeping Supervisor J. Gadwah will be retiring in April after 34 years with the County.

NHA Bolander discussed the County policy which refers to losing holiday pay if you call out the day before or after a holiday. She said that there was a Norovirus that had plagued both Nursing Home residents and staff and because of this virus, there were at least 15 callouts surrounding both the Christmas and New Year's Holidays. There was much discussion surrounding this issue.

Commissioner Burton moved to make an exception this time only, that would allow employees who had called out sick due to the Norovirus be paid holiday compensation, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

NHA Bolander said that this applies to this specific virus which seems understandable and reasonable.

The Commissioners had a conversation with NHA Bolander about the NACo Conference in Washington DC and what might be issues of importance. Commissioner Burton said that in his opinion, Grafton County representatives should leave something with the members of Congress they may meet.

Daryl Brown, Selectman from the town of Plymouth arrived to sit in on the Commissioner's meeting. Mr. Brown is the son-in-law of outgoing Grafton County Representative Carol Estes.

Commissioner Burton continued with NHA Bolander and said that he is teaching a class at Dartmouth to adult learners on "The Future of County Government" and had considered asking his class to come to the County complex, asking NHA Bolander if she would be interested in having a small gathering, which she said she would be more than willing to do.

Commissioner Cryans spoke generally about the recent decision that Strafford County has had to make in the laying off a number of its employees and noted the importance of this upcoming budget.

NHA Bolander said that Strafford had other issues such as trying to compete with Massachusetts salaries coupled with a low census at their nursing home.

There was some further discussion.

Commissioner Cryans readdressed Selectman Brown and asked him a little about himself. He said that he has three children and teaches computer science at PSU and is an independent computer consultant as well.

The Plymouth Selectboard has taken up the issue of the newly proposed Jail and he took a tour of the existing facility today. He said that he certainly had a better idea of the situation after that.

HR Director Joanne Mann arrived and passed out an employee activity report to the Commissioners.

There has been a 12.98% turnover in the County and a 16.77% turnover with LNA's Vacancies:

- 1-20 hr Dietary

- 1-21 hr Dietary

- Dietary Spares

- 2-LNA's 3-11 Shifts

Fire drills were performed at both the Courthouse and the Administration building and will be discussed at the next Joint Loss Meeting.

There will be a sexual harassment in-service on January 28th.

HRD Mann passed out a report form the NH Retirement System which she referred to as bleak.

Commissioner Burton asked HRD Mann if she was planning any more seminars and she said that she was planning a supervisor seminar in the spring.

Commissioner Cryans again brought up the topic of layoffs at Strafford County and what they had to do to keep their budget in line.

Director Clough presented a draft of a letter that was written to the US Congress addressing a stimulus incentive (financial assistance for the DOC) for Grafton County. The Commissioners reviewed the draft and wanted to make some changes.

Commissioner Burton said that he has heard that there will be no money for earmarks but thought that the letter should be sent regardless and then let Congress make a decision.

Commissioner Cryans wanted it noted that Executive Councilor Ray Burton will be starting his 16th term (32 years) as councilor and the longest serving Councilor in New Hampshire history.

11:30 AM The Commissioners broke to attend the swearing in of the Grafton County Assistant Attorneys and then to lunch.

12:40 PM The Commissioners returned.

Upon return, Commissioner Cryans stated that they had attended the swearing in of Attorney's James Vara, Lara Saffo, Nancy Grey and Melissa Pierce and signed their paperwork afterward.

Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop arrived. She said that the Social Service proposals are to be received no later than 3:00PM tomorrow afternoon and that other than that, she really didn't have much to report.

Commissioner Cryans asked if she wanted to comment about what was going on in Strafford County, including the removal of certain funding and she said that she assumed that it would continue.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the minutes from December 17, 2008, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. An edit was made, all were in favor.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Director Clough presented the annual audit engagement letter for review and signature which she said had increased as follows:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
<u>General</u>	\$13,400	\$12,350
<u>NH</u>	\$13,930	\$13,759
<u>Single</u>	\$ 5,690	\$ 3,910

Director Clough said that the reason for the large increase in the single audit is because there are more financial reports that need to be produced.

Commissioner Cryans signed the annual audit engagement letter.

Superintendent Libby arrived.

*1:00 PM – Commissioner Richards moved to enter into Executive Session as per RSA 91-A:3, Paragraph II, Section a). Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. All were in favor.

*1:15 PM– Commissioner Richards moved to come out of Executive Session and to permanently seal the Minutes from the Session. Commissioner Burton seconded the motion. All were in favor. No motions were made and no actions were taken while in Executive Session.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the new two year contract between Grafton County and Superintendent Glenn Libby, which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

The Commissioners and Supt. Libby signed the contract of agreement.

Commissioner Burton moved to reappoint the following Dept. Heads

Executive Director Julie Clough
Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander
Human Services Administrator Nancy Bishop
Human Resource Director Joanne Mann
Maintenance Superintendent Jim Oakes
IT Manager Brent Ruggles
Farm Manager Donnie Kimball,

which was seconded by Commissioner Richards. All were in favor.

Commissioner Burton said that he would encourage all the Administrative staff to attend any and all seminars and conferences made available to them including ones put on by the HR Dept., NHAC or others.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that a letter was received from Woodsville Water & Light which stated that they were not interested in taking over the water tank that was constructed at the County's expense and that they did not approve of the pouring specs and that they had heard that construction of the tank had been done under research and development. WW&L did however say that they would be willing to work on the tank with an hourly (2man) fee which did not include materials.

Commissioner Richards asked if this was done as an R&D project and Director Clough said that the R&D part was for NATGUN to see if it was cost effective to enclose the project in a greenhouse, nothing regarding the construction was R&D.. The greenhouse was to keep it warm to do the application of the shockcrete which is a form of concrete sprayed on the outside of the tank.

Director Clough said that in her opinion, WW&L has been resistant from the start and this is another one of their reasons not to assume the responsibility of the water tank. She said that S. Larocque was looking at costs for the County to have its own water system and break off from Woodsville.

Commissioner Burton said that there were serious accusations in that letter that need to be responded to. Director Clough said that Supt. Oakes and S. Larocque will draft a response.

Commissioner Cryans said that the tank was built for a purpose and that need is still there regardless of who is taking over the tank.

Commissioner Cryans asked Director Clough what DES would recommend now that WW& L does not want to assume responsibility.

Commissioner Richards asked if NATGUN can validate the decision of pouring the concrete under the greenhouse. Director Clough said she would look into it.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that letters had been received from Haverhill, Lyman, Warren, Ashland, Canaan and Hanover which voiced a concern over the building of a new Jail and asked that the Commissioners re-think the decision given this economic time.

An anonymous letter was received which stated that that Jail be put off and that some of the County land be sold to build housing on which would bring money into the County and lessen the tax burden.

Director Clough said that there has been a default on the terms of the loan from Citizens Bank for the Gile project. The County contributed to this project through a CDBG grant . Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to hear from the Hartland Group as to the current status.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners of the November Prescription Drug plan totals.

Total saving was \$8,634 for an average of 24.23% with 327 users.

There is a new accounting law for FY09 wherein you must account for post employment benefits and there is currently an RFP out for an Actuarial Study.

Director Clough said that all but one town has paid their taxes and the ex-Treasurer has put \$11M in Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank CDARS account which matures on January 22nd. The new Treasurer will be looking into investing that money.

Resumes for candidate for UNH Ag Specialist have been received from K. Jablonski for the Commissioner and Executive Director to review if so desired.

Director Clough will be sending the Department Heads their budget packet and asked the Commissioners if they had any input as to instructions.

Commissioner Richards said that there needs to be some strong directives.

Commissioner Burton said that everyone needs to make do with what they have for equipment.

Commissioner Cryans said that he would like to see jobs preserved so there are no major cutbacks but choices may need to be made such as no pay increase or perhaps even cuts. He said there will be tough choices to be made and it will be better to have a job with no pay raise than to not have a job at all. He said that there should be no new positions and that they should try to get by without filling empty positions.

COMMISSIONER ISSUES:

Commissioner Richards said that the report from BERC would be re-written, as there was new information, and then sent to the Delegation prior to the meeting on February 2nd.

Commissioner Richards said that she would like to revisit the decision of not meeting with SMRT and HP Cummings as she thinks it is important to do so in order to take a fresh look at the project. Director Clough said that she had spoken with A. Thompson of

SMRT and that he would not charge the County to come and discuss the issue. Commissioner Burton said that if there is no charge, what would the harm would be. Commissioner Cryans said that his concern is that he doesn't see the project moving forward right now and that having a meeting would accomplish nothing. He said that there is a process underway and that process is about waiting right now, which he doesn't see as hurting anything.

Commissioner Richards said that they agreeably disagree.

Commissioner Burton agreed with Commissioner Richards that it wouldn't hurt to meet. Commissioner Cryans said that if the other two Commissioners made that decision then he would have to acquiesce although he did disagree and said that they needed more time and better knowledge of the court decision.

Commissioner Burton asked if the award from NHAC ever made it to Evelyn Smith and Director Clough said she didn't think so. Commissioner Cryans said that if she is still in the area then perhaps the three Commissioners could deliver it to her.

The dedication of the Annual Report will be on January 27th at 9:00 AM.

Commissioner Cryans said that he and Commissioner Burton picked up a donation check in the amount of \$1000 from Wal-Mart in Littleton for the Barbara B. Hill Fund.

Director Clough informed the Commissioners that an objection from the Attorney representing Grafton County was filed on Christmas Eve and stated that legal fess should be awarded in the amount of \$23K only. There has been no objection from the opposition as of yet and it is presently in the Judge's hands. They will probably not know anything until the end of the month.

2:15 PM being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk