

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
Plymouth Senior Center
Plymouth, NH

Monday October 17, 2005

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

The Meeting was called to order 9:05 AM

Commissioner Cryans opened the meeting by requesting a moment of silence in remembrance of John Alger who passed away on October 11th. Mr. Alger was a long time member of the Executive Committee until recently.

Commissioner Cryans introduced himself and had the other Commissioners and Executive Director introduce themselves to the attendees and thanked Wes Gardner and Roberta Bernier for setting up the meeting and for the use of the facility.

Commissioner Gabler motioned to accept the minutes from the October 11th meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Commissioner Cryans informed the attendees of the new Grafton County Website and its address and invited anyone who was interested to come to the Grafton County Complex for a visit.

Commissioner Gabler noted that there were two Representatives present and introduced Rep. Robert Barker and Rep. Margie Maybeck.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Executive Director Clough presented the Commissioners with a bid waiver request from Human Resources, to contract with HR Partners of Maine to do a review and analysis of county wages and salaries. HR Partners has done other counties and the annual update for Grafton County over the last few years. Commissioner Gabler motioned to waive bid and accept the proposal from HR Partners for \$4,600, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough presented the Commissioners with a bid waiver request from Maintenance Supt. Oakes to purchase industrial storage cabinets from Global Industrial in the amount of \$11,370.01. Commissioner Burton motioned to waive bid and accept the proposal from Global Industrial, which was seconded by Commissioner Gabler. All were in favor.

The Executive Director presented a request from nursing home Administrator Eileen Bolander to rescind the \$1000. sign on bonus for LNA's and institute instead a \$300. recruitment/finders fee to any employee who recruits an LNA for hire.

Commissioner Gabler asked if anyone had been awarded the \$1000. sign on bonus. Executive Director Clough explained that if anyone was hired under that program, they have not yet completed the mandatory six month probationary period. It was explained that both NHA Bolander and the DON Renee Shields felt that the finders fee would be a better employee incentive.

Commissioner Gabler motioned to agree to rescind the \$1000. sign on bonus and institute a \$300 recruitment finders fee, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough asked the Commissioners if they had made their decision as to who the county report would be dedicated to. Commissioner Burton had chosen Noreen Williams from Bath, who has worked extensively for the Ammonusuc Heath Center. Commissioner Gabler had chosen John Alger and was able to convey that to him before his passing. Commissioner Cryans chose Dick Green from the Economic Development Council. All three Commissioners still need to provide pictures and their synopses.

The Executive Director presented the Commissioners with two innovative ideas from George Morris from Registry of Deeds. The first idea was to integrate WiFi (wireless internet) into the Registry of Deeds so that those people who use the registry can access their computers while there. Mr. Morris's second idea was to sponsor an ongoing poster contest for school students. Posters would be displayed on the windows of the courthouse, also functionally serving to block the direct sunlight from entering in. The Commissioners felt that both ideas were constructive and Commissioner Gabler moved to accept both ideas, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough handed the Commissioners the town tax apportionments for 2005, which are due in December.

Treasurer Carol Elliott was present and said that the tax bills were being prepared. She stated that there is a \$1M CD that will be maturing at the end of this week, with interest being \$23K. Tax payments are due to arrive in December and there is a slight chance that the county will not have to borrow money to cover expenses until then. If in case money is needed, Treasurer Elliott asked the Commissioners to approve borrowing up to \$2M if needed. Rep. Barker asked what the interest rate was if indeed the county did need to borrow money. Treasurer Elliott said that the last time she needed to borrow, she secured an interest rate of .99, which is a county rate.

One of the attendees asked why the county can't collect taxes twice a year as that is how often he pays his town taxes. The Executive Director stated that it was set up that way legislatively. Commissioner Gabler noted that one of the town taxes, (for Plymouth anyway) was an estimated tax, which would make it difficult when trying to compute total amounts when they came due.

Commissioner Gabler motioned to allow Treasurer Elliott to borrow up to \$2M if needed, which was seconded by Commissioner Burton. All were in favor.

Executive Director Clough presented the Commissioners with an invitation from the Haverhill Cooperative Middle School to come to a Lights On pot luck dinner on October 20th. Commissioner Burton has a prior engagement and will not be able to attend. Executive Director Clough may attend to represent Grafton County.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners that she had received a call from local attorney, Kevin Bruno, in regards to the old Commissioner's office building. He was calling on behalf of one of his clients. The Executive Director stated that none of the Grafton County departments would be able to use the building, so other options could be entertained. Commissioner Burton has been a proponent of renting the building out all along and suggested casting the net to see who might be interested. The Executive Director will find out what business square footage is renting for and contact some local real estate agents to see if they have any interested clients. Commissioner Cryans agreed that it would be a good idea to get some revenue from the building.

Executive Director Clough presented the Commissioners with a letter from HHS Commissioner Stephen saying how much he enjoyed meeting everyone at the county conference. Included was a letter from Senator Gregg regarding Funding for FY2006/ Commissioner Gabler asked that the Executive Director inform Commissioner Stephen that he was now Commissioner and not S. Panagoulis as the letter was addressed.

Executive Director Clough presented an education assistance application from an LNA who is taking RN courses. The total amount is \$3250, though the county will only authorize the normal education assistance as outlined in the Personnel Policies.

Commissioner Burton moved to approve the education assistance to said employee, which was seconded by Commissioner Gabler. All were in favor.

The Executive Director read a letter from the town of Canaan which thanked Commissioner Gabler for a visit and for informing the town of the availability of inmate labor via Supt. Libby's work project program. The letter went on to say that the town did not have the money in it's budget to do some of the things needed and the inmates helped by doing some painted and other odd jobs. They were very appreciative.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Mr. Harold Brown, a resident of Woodsville who was attending the meeting. Mr. Brown voiced his opinion, saying that there were too many bid waivers and that bids should be publicly advertised. Mr. Brown also went on to say that he thought the inmate work program was not a good one and that it takes work away from people, sighting the North Haverhill Fair as using inmate labor when they should have hired help. Mr. Brown also opined about the jail and that there are too many inmates in there that should instead be in drug rehabilitation. Those using drugs shouldn't be put in jail but rather left to their own devices and certainly not prosecuted and incarcerated, thus saving the taxpayers money. They should be able to take their drugs if they want. Commissioner Burton replied regarding the inmate work program, saying that the county does not force towns to accept the work project; the towns come to the county for help.

Commissioner Cryans informed the attendees that the Commissioners are very concerned about problems with drugs and voted to put \$25K in the budget this year for a drug court, in the hopes of offering alternatives to jail.

Mr. Brown said that putting drug offenders in jail doesn't work.

Mr. Wes Gardner, Chair of the Grafton County Committee on Aging, presented everyone with an informative PowerPoint presentation about the Plymouth Senior Center.

Commissioner Burton introduced Mary Ruell, a GCCOA member, and spoke of her efforts in many of the restorations in Ashland, including the Rail Road Station, The Whipple House and three museums. The newest project being the restoration and reuse of an 1877 Victorian building that was used as a schoolhouse.

Commissioner Gabler made a suggestion to the Executive Director that it would be better if employees park anywhere other than directly in front of the Administration Building, which should be reserved for those who are conducting business in the building.

Commissioner Cryans spoke briefly about Pumpkin Day, which was a big hit at the Grafton County Complex, particularly noting how joyful the kids were to have ridden a hay wagon and picking pumpkins out in the field.

*11:27 AM – Commissioner Burton moved to enter into Executive Session as per RSA 91-A:3, Paragraph II, Section a). Commissioner Gabler seconded the motion. All were in favor.

11:42 AM – Commissioner Gabler 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 concur with Superintendent Libby's decision to suspend one of his employees, which was seconded by Commissioner Gabler. All were in favor.

The Commissioner's Meeting on November 21st. will be cancelled.

The Commissioners will hold their meeting in Lincoln on November 28th.

Commissioner Cryans moved to donate \$2500 to the American Red Cross on behalf of Hurricane Katrina, which will be added to the donations made by the Employees, and to donate \$2500 to the victims of the floods in southern New Hampshire, which was seconded by Commissioner Gabler. All were in favor.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:55 AM

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk