

GRAFTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Lincoln Town Office

Lincoln, NH

Monday November 28, 2005

PRESENT: Commissioners Michael Cryans, and Ray Burton, Executive Director Julie Clough, Nursing Home Administrator Eileen Bolander, Sheriff Doug Dutile, Superintendent of Corrections Glenn Libby and Secretary Jeri Martino.

GUESTS PRESENT: Representatives Edmond Gionet and Bonnie Hamm, Town Manager Ted Sutton, Linwood High School Students Nate Carter, Chris Englert and Joe Tamulonis, Local Residents Wilfred Bishop, Ken Gray and Harold Brown. Chamber of Commerce Director Brian McCarthy.

EXCUSED: Commissioner Bill Gabler

Commissioner Cryans call the meeting to order 9:15 AM

Commissioner Cryans introduced everyone, recognized Representatives Gionet and Hamm and thanked everyone for attending. Commissioner Burton introduced the three Lin-Wood High students who were there to video tape the meeting for their local cable channel 3, as well as the Town Manager and other attendees. Commissioner Cryans mentioned that he had grown up in Littleton and worked at the paper mill in Lincoln back in 1969. He also noted that Lincoln was not only well-known for it's skiing but offered many other activities year round. Commissioner Cryans then went on to note that Grafton County is the second largest county in area in New Hampshire with a total population of approximately eighty-five thousand residents, which account for about 6% of the total population of New Hampshire.

Town Manger Ted Sutton was recognized and stood up and welcomed the Commissioners and thanked them for coming to Lincoln.

Commissioner Burton moved to accept the minutes from the November 14th meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. All were in favor

Commissioner Cryans announced that there is a new County website and gave the address. Mr. Bishop asked if it had a section for comments, which is currently does not, and suggested that one be added.

The Commissioners signed the check registers.

Commissioner Cryans noted that Register of Deeds, Joel Dupuis could not attend but sent along a report which showed higher revenues than estimated. The Commissioner noted that the Lincoln area plays a big part in the revenue from the transfer of deeds.

The Executive Director informed the Commissioners that there was a UNH Extension Advisory Council Meeting this evening at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Burton will attend.

Commissioner Cryans informed the room that there was a UNH Pictel presentation held recently at the Cooperative Extension Office in Grafton County. The focus was on the land and forests that the counties own. Commissioner Burton noted that it was a good way for the community to meet and become informed. Mr. Bishop noted that the Lin-Wood School has the capability of Pictel but in his opinion, it was underutilized. There was some discussion as to whether or not Commissioner Meetings could be done in this way. Commissioner Cryans said that the equipment was owned and operated by the University.

Executive Director Clough presented the Holiday Schedule for 2006 for the Commissioners to review and approve. Commissioner Burton moved to approve the 2006 holiday schedule, which was seconded by Commissioner Cryans. All were in favor.

The Executive Director updated the Commissioners on a new proposal for the removal of asbestos from the Courthouse as the hall outside of the Attorney's Office was not included in the original proposal of \$16K. The new proposed cost will be \$19,500. It was noted by the Executive Director that the judges were concerned about remaining in the building while the asbestos removal is taking place. Work is schedule for December 8 thru 11.

Commissioner Cryans introduced Nursing Home Administrator Bolander and asked her to talk about the nursing home.

NHA Bolander began by saying that a new addition was added a few years ago which added another fifty-thousand square feet. It houses 60 residents, the laundry, kitchen, activities area and Alzheimer unit. The Alzheimer unit is a secure, rounded unit where the staff is fully trained for that particular disease. There is an additional five week training program scheduled to begin. There are currently 121 residents at present with 2 of those coming from the Lincoln area.

Commissioner Cryans asked NHA Bolander to describe a normal day at the nursing home, which she proceeded to do saying that the day begins with breakfast. After breakfast, the residents are welcome to participate in the many activities offered, which may include crafts, sing alongs, games etc. Lunch and dinner are served each day. NHA Bolander went on to say that there are also many special activities offered at the home such as "Trick or Treat" street, which was recently held at Halloween with a participation of around 300 children. The units are always decorated during each holiday and events such as shopping, Christmas carolers and parties are a usual treat.

Mr. Bishop asked if residents had access to the internet. NHA Bolander said that yes in fact they did and that it would probably increase as the incoming population was more technologically proficient. Mr. Bishop noted that there was currently a Senior Net set up in his community for people to partake in.

Mr. Brown asked if the nursing home took in indigent people, which NHA Bolander said that they did. Mr. Gray said that he applauded what Grafton County is doing for the senior population and that they are setting a good example for positive things that can be done.

NHA Bolander then spoke about the Licensed Nursing Program that was recently offered at the nursing home, saying that she was honored to have been able to house the clinical site for the program. Seven employees from Grafton County recently graduated from that program on November 4<sup>th</sup> in a graduation ceremony in Woodsville, and will be preparing to take their final certification exams. NHA Bolander said that she was very proud of their accomplishments and hard work. The graduates gave up much of their time in order to complete this program.

NHA Bolander informed the attendees that there would be a book signing on November 30<sup>th</sup> of a local author, Sheila Bass, who also happens to be a Nurse at the home. The book was written by Ms. Bass about a piglet, who being the runt of the litter needed some extra attention. The piglet was brought into the nursing home by Ms. Bass and then was taken care of and found a home with another employee. The book is called "Because you Cared", and is delightfully illustrated and written. Ms. Bass will be donating 20% of the proceeds to the Home Association. Mr. Gray noted how accomplishments can be made by people if given the opportunity.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners that she had received a letter and citations from the Department of Labor regarding the inspection that took place recently, stating that all the physical items on the list had been corrected. The letter notes that a manual must be put together by the first of December. Executive Director Clough is replying with a letter of request for a sixty day extension in order to prepare the manual. A committee is already in place to do so. Commissioner Burton asked if there were any fines at this point and the Executive Director said that she was not aware of any at this time.

Commissioner Cryans recognized Representative Bonnie Hamm and asked if she would like to say a few words. Rep. Hamm welcomed and thanked the Commissioners for coming and stated that she was born and raised in Lincoln. Rep. Hamm also noted in reference to the Lin-Wood School, that students are allowed to participate in area education programs and to take part in the new technologies offered.

Commissioner Cryans informed the room that there are twenty-six Representatives which make up the Delegation. Nine of those Delegation members make up the Executive Committee, recognizing Rep. Gionet as one of those committee members. Rep. Gionet thanked the Commissioners for being there and said that the meeting was a wonderful opportunity for people to come out and see what county government is all about, although the weather may have prevented many from attending. Rep. Gionet also said that he was very pleased at the operation of the county and said that it was a great honor for him to serve. Commissioner Cryans thanked the Representatives for all their hard work and support.

Commissioner Cryans introduced Sheriff Dutile and asked that he speak on behalf of the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Dutile gave a brief overview of the department and the duties associated with it. There are currently 11 fulltime sworn in personnel and 20 part-time sworn in personnel. There are 2 non sworn in personnel. Dispatch has 10 fulltime personnel and 12 part-time personnel. Some of the revenues of the Sheriff's Dept. come from forest service security, dispatch, security, transport, court fines and the sale of used cruisers. Some of the duties of the Sheriff's Department include but are not limited to: court security, transportation of inmates, serving writs, extraditions and small claims arrests.

The dispatch center serves 25 towns in NH and VT, 23 Fire Depts. in NH and VT and 15 EMS in NH and VT. The Sheriff said that there is a concerted effort to work cohesively with all the local towns.

Sheriff Dutile invited anyone who was interested to come and visit the facility during County Week in April when there are tours of the area. He welcomed any questions.

Commissioner Burton commended the Sheriff for attending the Governors Safety Breakfast and also asked how the planning of the improved courtroom security was going. Sheriff Dutile replied that there was a study committee that was underway to see if it was worthwhile to have the Sheriff's Department take over all the security in the district court. He also noted that cameras have or are being installed. Mr. Gray made mention of the need for stronger penalties for the illegal parking in handicap spots. In agreement with Mr. Gray, Sheriff Dutile suggested that anyone seeing that violation taking place should immediately contact their areas local law enforcement agent.

Superintendent of Corrections, Glenn Libby spoke next and thanked everyone for attending. Supt. Libby stated that the jail population is currently at 112, which includes both a pretrial and sentenced population. Those sentenced are there for one year or less.

There was recently a Threshold graduation, which is a five week program run with mentor volunteers to help those incarcerated learn how to make better decisions. The recidivism rate for those who attend the program is considerably lower than for those who do not.

Another program offered at the facility is Operation Impact, which gives school age children a tour through the facility and culminates with an inmate seminar after the tour. The intention is to pre warn children of the potential consequences of their actions and to deter them from a life a crime.

Supt. Libby went on to talk about the growing drug problems saying that up to 95% of the inmates have drug related problems. A \$20K grant has been received to develop a drug/alcohol counseling program specifically for women, who are quickly becoming the growing population. There is also an AA program which is attended by approximately 30 people from both inside and outside the facility. Inmates also work on the farm and on other supervised projects. There is also a special education tutor to help those under the age of 21 get their GED. Mr. Gray said that he was doubly delighted at the Grafton County's holistic approach to social problems, which is a step in the right direction. Supt. Libby extended accolades to the Executive Director, the Nursing Home Administrator and the Sheriff for their support.

Commissioner Cryans commended the Executive Director on her fine job as County Administrator, noting that she oversees the county's \$26M budget and 360 employees, adding that they were lucky to have her on board.

Mr. Brown asked the Superintendent where the female offenders got their money to buy drugs, wondering if it was from prostitution. Supt. Libby said he believed that it was from either selling or making drugs and not prostitution.

Mr. Bishop asked if the county had any specific energy plans due to the crunch right now. Commissioner Cryans replied that the lock in rate for fuel oil took quite some negotiations and any further question regarding energy could be answered by the Superintendent of Maintenance.

Executive Director Clough informed the Commissioners that bid requests have been sent out for CDBG grant administration for the Dartmouth Regional Technical Center.

The Executive Director informed the Commissioners that the rate increase for health insurance for 2006 will be 17.4% and 16.5% for medicomp.

Mr. Sutton said that he had changed over their insurance from the municipality to PRIMEX and the rate increase was only 4%.

After receiving information at the Farm Advisory Board meeting regarding the notice of the closing of the ATV trails on the county property, Executive Director Clough pursued it further and found that it was in fact posted on their website. Since this information was not true, the Executive Director contacted the ATV club president and informed him that the County did not post the restriction and that only the Commissioners have the authority to do so.

#### COMMISSIONER ISSUES

Commissioner Burton noted that there were discussions underway regarding the value of county government and a bill has been proposed by Senator Burling to eliminate it. Commissioner Burton says that he welcomes this discussion as he believes that county roots run deep. He suggested that the Executive Director coordinate with her administrative team and make a list of what the county is currently doing, in conjunction with the state and then the board of Commissioners should take a stand.

Mr. Gray said that he had lived in Connecticut where they had done away with county government and he said that it (state run government) just doesn't work there.

Commissioner Burton asked about the status of the Long Term Planning questionnaire/survey. Executive Director Clough said that the survey went out to employees on the 16<sup>th</sup> of November and that it was scheduled to go out to the Delegation and Selectman soon. There will also be meetings in the three districts for the people in the county. Drop boxes are available in the County buildings for returns. Commissioner Burton asked if the survey was also available on the website. The Executive Director said that it was Commissioner Gabler's choice not to make it available online. Commissioner Burton asked the high school students if they could put it on their cable channel, which they said they could. He also said that it was his recommendation that it be on the Grafton County website as well.

Mr. Bishop asked if the Commissioner meetings could be telecast and it was suggested that Richard Baker at Lin-Wood School be contacted.

The Chair recognized Harold Brown, local Woodsville resident. Mr. Brown spoke on quite a few subjects that he felt strongly about regarding the policies and procedures of Grafton

County. He began with the Farm Stand pricing policy which he said affected his life, impacted his business and caused other local farmers to have to close their businesses. He also spoke about Pumpkin Day, saying that he didn't think that the County should be giving away pumpkins when he had them to sell, and that the County uses this day to boost the political standings and looks for votes at the expense of the taxpayers. Mr. Brown spoke about the jail and how it should not be used to house those who are drug offenders. Mr. Brown said that if a person wanted to use drugs, that should be their own business and should not be considered criminal adding the opinion that if you take away those incarcerated for drug violations and the jail would only house ten people. He also noted that he didn't see how making inmates pick up trash is considered an educational practice. Inmates should be in classrooms and not competing with local enterprise. On that note, Mr. Brown said that the county was considering building a new jail and that he opposed that also. Mr. Brown also had negative comments about the handling of the budget. Mr. Brown began to address many other political concerns not related to County government and the Chair felt it necessary to go onto other matters.

Mr. Gray said that he could see both sides of the battle but there should be a joint search for a win win situation.

Rep. Gionet was recognized and spoke in defense of the Commissioners noting that the delegation is responsible for the final approval of the budget and the delegation members are chosen by the constituency.

Commissioner Cryans thanked the three Lin-Wood School students for attending and asked if they had any questions or comments. Chris Englert stated that this was the most efficiently run meeting he had seen.

Commissioner Burton introduced Brian McCarthy from the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce.

Commissioner Cryans thanked everyone in the room for coming.

Being no further business the meeting adjourned at 11:30 AM

---

Raymond S. Burton, Clerk