

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, February 18, 2015 09:30AM
Commissioners Conference Room
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Rogers, Weed, and Graves

STAFF: Finance Director Trombly, Superintendent Van Wickler, Sheriff Rivera, Amanda Littleton, Manager Conservation District, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

Guests: Jack Dugan, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

Commissioner Rogers opened the meeting at 09:32AM and took-up agenda item #2: *Elected Officials and Department Managers Updates*; recognizing Sheriff Rivera. The Sheriff said that the lawsuit that was recently filed concerning the timely delivery of Service Paperwork has been dismissed by the Courts. He also said that the Sheriff's department has been hired by the Army Corps of Engineers to patrol the Surry Dam area for the summer. The impact on the department is expected to minimal.

Superintendent Van Wickler was then recognized and discussed four (4) assaults that have recently happened at the Department of Corrections. He said that two (2) of the assaults were inmates on inmates and two (2) were inmates attacking Correctional Officers. He said that all four (4) of the assaults were likely the result of the growing problem of mental illness issues among the inmate population. In the case where the Correctional Officers were attacked, one of the C. O.'s sustained a facial cut that required four (4) stiches to close. Van Wickler said that overall the DOC is seeing a significant increase in aggressive behaviors from the inmates with most of the problems being seen in the inmates with mental impairments.

Van Wickler then discussed the certification of the two (2) C. O.'s that was completed last week and discussed the chaotic meeting that certified the officers by a vote of six to four (6-4). A discussion of the history of the certification process began and the reasons that the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) is involved in the certification process were reviewed. Group I vs Group II retirement benefits were covered and the costs of sending C. O.'s in training to the Academy in Concord were discussed. The discussion continued covering the options available to the County for certifying C. O.'s and the required change in New Hampshire RSA's that would need to be made to maintain eligibility in Group II retirement if the County were to certify its own C. O.'s.

Conservation Manager Littleton was then recognized for Action Item #184 and presented the following quarterly report to the Commissioners:

Cheshire County Conservation District – Quarterly Report
February 18, 2015

Soil

- Planning outreach for early Spring rental of no-till seeder, wood ash and lime spreader, aerator, roller crimper, and sub-soiler.
- Planning workshops on soil health and equipment use in April, June, and August.

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- In partnership with NRCS and the Monadnock Conservancy we held a forum on agricultural Farmland conservation.

Water

- Offering rentals of three skidder bridges and researching another skidder bridge building workshop where we would create a fourth bridge to offer as a rental.
- Working with partners on planning the Kemp Brook riparian plantings.

Wildlife

- Working on the Cheshire County Pollinator Initiative
- Early planning is underway for a project focused on aquatic organism passage in partnership with Trout Unlimited, The Harris Center and the Town of Swanzey.
- Plant Sale is underway – Also hosting a series of three workshops on landscaping with Native plants, landscaping to benefit pollinators, etc.

Farm Viability

- Planning two community forums as part of a USDA SARE Partnership grant in partnership with Land For Good, the Monadnock Conservancy, and UNH Cooperative Extension. This will work to connect conservation land owners with farmers and create or strengthen mutually beneficial land tenure relationships.
- Starting to accept applications for the 2015 Monadnock Localvores' Jeffrey P. Smith Farm Scholarship Program to send youth to farm camps.
- Continued work with Keene Farmer's Markets to double SNAP benefits and working with the NH Food Bank and Wholesome Wave on a statewide network.
- Continued work with partners to run Monadnock Menus – the aggregation and distribution program for wholesale food buyers and farms in the region.

Littleton discussed the details of the report and also described the Fallsbrook Habitat project for restoring approximately ten (10) miles of the trout habitat to the Ashuelot River in and around the town of Swanzey. Also discussed was the Farm to Table program that had \$61,000.00 of sales in 2014 with a goal of \$100,000.00 of sales in 2015. Littleton also reviewed the equipment rental program that the Conservation District runs and answered a number of questions from the Commissioners on the operations of the District.

The Commissioners thanked Littleton for her report and the Chair recognized Jack Dugan the Executive Director of Monadnock Economic Development Corporation who was present to discuss Action Item #182 -NH CDFA - CDBG Grants for Commercial Microenterprises. Dugan began by saying that he was contacted by the State to ask if the County was interested in participating in grants for Commercial Microenterprises as a large amount of the monies awarded have been coming into the County. Specifically he said, the largest recipient of the

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funds has been the Hanna Grimes center in Keene. An extended discussion began about the program and the potential impact on the Counties other CDGB funds and it was learned that these grants are completely separate funds from the block grants that the County has administered in the past for housing and economic development activities within the County. Representatives from the State and Grafton County who have been applying for the bulk of the grants, will be invited to the Commissioners meeting on March 4, 2014 to present the program details and to discuss County participation.

Action Item #183 - Kinder Morgan Pipeline Letter to Towns was then taken-up for discussion. Commissioner Rogers reviewed the letter that was drafted to the towns that could be potentially affected by the proposed Kinder Morgan gas pipeline. The letter asks the towns ... *whether your Board of Selectmen would find it useful for the County to organize a committee of the towns and for the County to assist in developing the responses that will be required during the approval process for the proposed pipeline. The purpose of the committee would be to gather and share information, and to discuss and formulate consistent answers and responses to common problems and issues. The role of the County in this committee would be to facilitate the work of the committee and to assist the towns in seeking resolution of common issues. It is not the goal of the County to dominate this process in any way but, rather, to act as a facilitator for the constituent interested towns...*

Also discussed was the response letter sent to AECOM who is a consultant to Kinder Morgan seeking ...*information relative to aquifers, protected aquifer zones, surface waters used for drinking water supply, open space issues, locally significant roads, scenic areas or rivers, locations of schools, parks, ball fields and trails. It also inquires about planned residential, industrial and commercial developments...*

The letter explained that the County does not keep records of the type being sought but other agencies within the County may do so. It also explained that the potential impact to the environment and aquifer were extremely concerning and that a plan to develop the needed data could potentially be very expensive to produce. ... *We anticipate that the cost of developing the requested information will be very high and feel that it should not be done at the expense of the property tax payers of this County. We would appreciate it if you would let us know what arrangements AECOM and its associated companies plan to make to allow us to engage the experts that will be required to develop the information that you have requested and that we will need to properly evaluate this project and its effect upon the people of Cheshire County...*

ACA Bouchard will prepare the documents and send the letters out this week.

ACA Bouchard then provided an abbreviated weekly operations report and said that he was able to negotiate a better price on the copier rental approved last week and the price would drop from \$100.20 a month to \$82.00 a month.

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He also discussed that the Surveyor engaged by County for the Westmoreland property was finally able to connect with the last remaining abutter and an agreement on the boundary line was expected within the next week.

The weekly Census was then reviewed.

Commissioner Weed moved to accept the Weekly Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of February 11, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes as amended. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners then reviewed the Commissioners Calendar.

At 12:00PM Pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Rogers moved to go into non-public session to discuss a matter, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, without that person having requested an open meeting. The motion was approved unanimously upon a roll call vote of Commissioners.

As a result of the deliberations in nonpublic session no decisions were made and no vote taken.

At 12:10PM the Commissioners unanimously voted to return to public session.

At 12:11 PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
P. Graves, Clerk