

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, February 25, 2015 09:30AM
Commissioners Conference Room
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Weed and Graves, Commissioner Rogers absent with notice.

STAFF: Superintendent Van Wickler, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

Vice-Chairman Weed opened the meeting at 09:30AM and recognized Superintendent Van Wickler for the purpose of providing the Quarterly Department of Corrections report.

Van Wickler began by saying that no further assaults have occurred at the jail and two (2) of the inmates who committed the assaults have been indicted. In response to a question from the Commissioners Van Wickler then discussed the working relationship that has been established with the State Prison staff and spoke of the transfer of inmates between the facilities when it is in the best interests of the facilities and/or inmates to be held in a different facility.

Van Wickler then discussed the certification of the two (2) Correctional Officers (C. O.'s) that was recently completed and discussed the certification requirements for twelve (12) more C. O.'s that are pending. He said that due to an agreement with NHAC no other certification requests will be submitted until the rules for the certification and review process have been revisited and rewritten.

An extended discussion concerning the need for C. O. certifications began and Van Wickler stated that without C. O. certification the County could potentially be open to lawsuits. He then reviewed an untimely death that occurred at the facility a few years ago and described the handling of the incident and response by the staff.

He went on to say that he was examining the possibility of running C. O. Academy certification classes in-house and is studying the costs to see if it is feasible to do so. The additional overtime cost are the largest concern. Van Wickler said that he has also contacted the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and inquired about the process and cost of having NIC "certify" the County DOC training program as meeting or exceeding required National standards. The process would include having NIC personnel on-site to conduct a job task analysis of the current program.

Van Wickler then discussed the Electronic Monitoring (EM) program that has grown significantly over the last few years. He said that the program was originally funded for a much smaller number of participants and that over the last year there are now two (2X) times the number of sentenced inmates and three (3X) times the number of pre-trial inmates in the program. With the large increase in EM equipment usage, the costs for the program could potentially double or triple what is currently budgeted. Van Wickler discussed the various equipment options that are available and the costs associated with the options. He said that he has been examining alternatives with his staff and will also discuss the issue with the courts to determine if all of the current inmates in the program need to be on EM.

Van Wickler then discussed the food service contract with Fitz Vogt that is scheduled to end next

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month. He explained in detail the structure and operations of the current kitchen staff and reviewed the costs of the program. He said that the program currently runs about \$500,000.00 per year and he is looking for ways to decrease the costs.

He reviewed some of the possible options and suggested that the kitchen manager D. Nason attend next week's Commissioners meeting to discuss ideas and alternatives for the food contract. The Commissioners agreed that having a discussion with Nason would be a good idea and Van Wickler and Nason will be scheduled to present at next week's meeting.

Van Wickler then discussed a C. O. that is being mobilized for active military duty and the impact that will have on the staff. He also discussed a C. O. who was suspended for three (3) days for unprofessional conduct and said that a senior C. O. had recently left the facility with no prior notification.

A discussion of the progress of the repairs to the DOC HVAC system began and Van Wickler discussed a letter that he had received from Granite State Automation outlining the remaining work to be accomplished. Granite State has not been at the facility for over a week as they have been responding to emergency calls due to the state-wide extreme cold snap that is being experienced. It was noted that the Weather service now says that February 2015 is the coldest February that has ever been recorded.

The Commissioners thanked Van Wickler for his report and the recognized ACA Bouchard for the purpose of providing the Weekly Operations report. Bouchard said that the documentation for the WEX card program has been completed and submitted and the program should be implemented within the next two weeks. As of today's retail gas prices the program should provide about a forty cents (.40) per gallon savings for all County vehicles.

Bouchard then reviewed the on-going discussions with Honeywell and Control Technologies the two (2) building and HVAC vendors used by the County. He said that significant savings may be realized by having the facilities staff take on more of the routine maintenance such as belts and filters and moving from a full coverage contract to a time and materials contract for both downtown buildings.

Bouchard then informed the Commissioners that the grant for the Sheriff's hand-held radar units have been approved and the units will be acquired shortly.

The boundary line agreement with the last abutter on the County farm land was then discussed by Bouchard and he said that in conversation with the Surveyor it was felt that a boundary line agreement should be drawn up and presented to the abutter as both the Surveyor and abutter agree on the course of the boundary line. The Surveyor will contact attorney John Rab to provide the necessary data and Bouchard will follow-up with attorney Rab.

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The weekly Census was then reviewed.

Commissioner Graves then moved to accept the Weekly Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea's.

The minutes of February 18, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea's.

The Commissioners then reviewed the Commissioners Calendar.

At 11:12 AM there being no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Graves moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea's.**

Respectfully Submitted,
P. Graves, Clerk