

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday May 4, 2016 9:30AM
County Hall Building
Commissioners Conference Room
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Stillman Rogers, Charles Weed, and Peter Graves

STAFF: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director Hurley, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, Maplewood Facilities Manager Harrison, Sheriff Rivera, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

Guests: Jack Dugan, Monadnock Economic Development Corp, Phil Suter, Executive Director, Keene Chamber of Commerce.

At 9:30AM Chairman Rogers opened the meeting and recognized Administrator Coates who provided a background of the economic development issues in the County and discussed how some of the County municipalities are seeking assistance in the developing a stronger economic base. He said that he had invited Jack Dugan and Phil Suter to the meeting to discuss the issues and to help the Commissioners understand the opportunities and obstacles for economic development in the greater County catchment area.

Dugan began and said that although there is a good level of economic activity in the county, it is mostly centered in Keene. He said that some of the challenges that employers are facing is a low unemployment rate and lack of a skilled and qualified workforce.

He then listed eight issues that are roadblocks / impediments to regional economic development.

1. Utilities and Infrastructure – specifically the lack of ubiquitous broadband in the area.
2. The regulatory environment. He said that it is getting increasing difficult and expensive for businesses to establish a presence in the County because of the amount of time and complexity of local municipal rules and regulations that must be complied with in order to start a new business.
3. Real Estate Conditions – Dugan discussed the number of old houses and old buildings that are not suitable for conversion to business use or not viable because of the cost of conversion.
4. Economic Relocation Incentives – There are few if any active programs to help an out-of-state company relocate to NH. The Cheshire County area in particular is often overlooked as most of the available efforts are centered on the eastern side of the state.
5. Business Climate – Conducting business in NH used to be more attractive and was marketed as the “New Hampshire Advantage”. This is no longer true and the negatives have begun to outweigh the positives when trying to attract companies from other states.
6. The local County catchment area does not have public transportation, or good interstate highway access to major North – South or East – West routes.
7. Labor Costs – The labor pool in the County is not sufficiently trained to take advanced manufacturing jobs due to a lack of skills. A tighter bond must be formed between businesses and schools to train workers in the skills that businesses require.
8. Labor Availability – Simply put, there are not enough workers in the area to support the growth of businesses who are looking to expand.

Suter then said that although the region can compete in terms of overall quality of life issues, it is

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at a distinct disadvantage in other economic areas.

He said that for the third or fourth year in a row a NH House Bill to allow municipalities to bond for broadband projects has failed to pass due primarily to opposition by the telecommunications industry.

He said that in the Monadnock region there is not a regularly scheduled public transportation system to take passengers to and from train stations, airports, and other destination sites.

Workforce development is a growing issue as is the trend for jobs to go where the people are. This is the reverse of the way it used to be, that people would go where the jobs are.

Suter said that there is no longer a State funded branding and promotion program to attract out of state companies as well as no New England marketing campaigns promoting New England on a national basis.

An extended discussion began and many aspects of the issues raised by Suter and Dugan were explored and reviewed.

The Commissioners thanked Dugan and Suter for their insights and leadership and for attending the meeting to discuss the issues affecting the County.

Master Agenda Item #382: ALF Roofing Bid Reviews and Recommendation - B. Harrison. Manager Harrison was recognized and presented information on the bids that were received. He said that eight (8) bids were received and three (3) bidders were invited to the interviews committee that consisted of Harrison, the County Administrator and the Assistant County Administrator, to review the bids and to answer questions concerning approach, installation, warranty, and numerous other issues.

In addition, references were thoroughly checked and a recommendation was developed based on criteria set forth in the initial RFP which states: *“The County’s assessment of the lowest responsible bidder, in addition to price, includes the skill, ability, and capacity of the bidder to perform the services. We consider the character, reputation, judgment, and experience of the bidder and how bidders perform in interviews and in response to inquiries. Hence, some aspects of the bidder reviews are objective and some are subjective”*.

Harrison said that based on the RFP responses it was the review committee’s recommendation to award the bid to Centimark Corporation, 101 Brick Kiln Rd #10, Chelmsford, MA.

The Commissioners asked numerous questions about the review and selection process and discussed the companies that had been granted interviews. **Following discussion Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the award of the bid to Centimark and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

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Master Agenda Item #383: Mobile Communication System - No Bid Request - Sheriff's Department was then taken up for review and Sheriff Rivera was recognized.

Rivera said that for over a year the Sheriff's dispatch department has reviewing equipment and equipment manufacturers to find a unit that provides Land Mobile Radio (LMR) interoperability between police, fire, and other public safety units. It has found one company in Canada (Basecamp) that makes the equipment and utilizes Cell over IP (CIP) technologies. He said that the equipment is approximately \$31,000.00 and the funds will come from Entergy Corporation as part of the close out procedure funds for the Vermont Yankee Nuclear plant. **Following discussion Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the Sheriff's department to acquire the equipment using Entergy Corporation public safety allocation funds and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #380: Nurse Retention - Education Reimbursement Program was then taken-up for discussion. Maplewood Administrator Kindopp was recognized and presented a program to assist in employee nurse retention. The program is an education reimbursement plan that will be trialed during the remainder of the year. It will assist the qualifying nursing staff with some financial assistance in repaying student loans accumulated in obtaining their nursing degrees.

A number of issues were discussed and the documentation for the program was reviewed and some minor changes were suggested. Kindopp said that the total cost of the program will not exceed the \$12,000.00 that was budgeted for 2016. **Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the implementation of a nursing education reimbursement program aimed at staff retention to be funded with \$12,000.00 in the current budget. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #381: Relias Learning Program - Maplewood was then reviewed. Kindopp explained that in researching what other County nursing homes are doing for staff training and certification renewals, it was learned that a number of counties were using a program called Relias Learning. She said that after investigating the program and talking with other County Nursing Home Administrator's she decided to investigate the program further instead of placing an LNA into the vacant position since the LNA staff is currently about 20% below its authorized levels. She said that she is requesting the Commissioners to authorize the acquisition of the Relias Learning System and would use funds from the presently authorized Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) position to fund the program. The anticipated cost for the program is approximately \$15,000.00 vs the cost of a staff member which is \$46,756.00 with benefits.

A long discussion about the program and its administration began. **Commissioner Weed then moved to authorize the acquisition of program and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

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At 11:43AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Weed 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.

As a result of deliberations in non-public session, no decisions were made and no vote was taken.

At 11:50AM the Commissioners voted unanimously voted to return to public session.

Master Agenda Item #379: Quarterly Report – Finance. S. Trombly presented her quarterly report to the Commissioners and highlighted the following areas:

RE: 1st quarter 2016 Budget Review

- No Staffing Changes — however have received notice of retirement of A/P Coordinator in August. Will be posting for this position soon.
- 2016 1st quarter review — Summary Attached
- 2015 Unassigned Fund Balance — Actual per Audited Financials - \$5,267,682. (12.07% of 2015 Adopted budget) Reported to Delegation on 2/9/16 estimate of \$5,100,000.
- 2016 TAN borrowing funds — Sale date schedule for May 10, 2016 issue of \$16,500,000 settling on 5/18/2016.
2014 TAN's
Rate paid 2015 - .240% - net interest \$28,427.
Rate paid 2014 - .223792% - net interest \$21,070.
Rate paid 2013 - .52% - net interest \$55,357.
- Health Care Reform — issued the first 1095's as required by the ACA. Krono's — In process of Upgrade that is to be complete by July 1 to meet deadline of PBJ (Payroll Based Journal) — New re ECS
- Medicaid Provider # - Behavioral Health/Drug Court Medicaid Provider # obtained
- Managed Care —Phase II (managed care for Long Term Care) has been postponed from the original expected Sept 2016. No known date yet established. Original date for Phase II was set for December 2014
- Medicaid Pending and Penalty cases — Pending cases over 75 days is 3 (a decrease of 4 from a year ago). Penalties cases as of 5/1/16 is (4) — totaling \$124,347.96 (no change for the last

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3 years.) Continue to take a deduction on the monthly State bill for both Medicaid pending over 75 days and Penalty cases.

At the end of the first quarter, revenues adjusted for the tax collection pattern have reached 25.35% of the budgeted revenue projections with the Nursing Home having achieved 23.80%. As revenues should be at 25%, this indicates that revenues are ahead of expectations for the General County but running short for the Nursing Home. The totals combined almost offset one another with a small deficit of approximately \$22,000.

At the end of the first quarter, **expenses** are below budget by \$214,373 after adjusting for major items that have not been expended due to timing. Overall county expenses are at 24.74% spent and Maplewood having expended 24.00% of their appropriated budget.

As you review the first quarter reports, the following areas may be of interest:

Revenues: General County

Page 1 — Municipal Assessment is a 0.00% of the projected budget. This remains at zero for most of the year until the Department of Revenue Administration provides the appropriation listing and the bills have been mailed. Taxes will be due by December 19th for 2016.

Page 2 — Registry of Deeds fees have reached 20.23% of the budgeted projections. As recorded documents tend to be slower in the winter months, it is likely as the year progresses that this revenue will hit projections for 2016.

Page 2 — Federal Inmates revenues have already achieved 42.29% of the 2016 budgeted revenues. The 2016 census is budgeted for 27 Federal Inmates. To date the average census has been 46 with a high of 56. Although it is still very early on in the year, if the census levels continue, year- end could result in a potential excess of \$715,000.

Page 4 — Jaffrey District Court Lease — this budget line remains at 0.00% of its projected revenues at the end of the first quarter but will attain 100% of its budgeted revenue. This revenue is the lease payment received by the State of NH that is directly tied to the annual bond payment for the Jaffrey District Court House. The State reimburses the County two times a year to coincide with the timing of the interest and principal payments.

Page 5- Transfer from Fund Balance is at 0.00%. This line item will remain at 0.00% throughout the year. No entry is made as the offset is an accounting function of an automated decline in fund balance based on actuals and the final amount needed from fund balance at year-end.

Page 5 — Transfer from Capital Reserve — this item is at 0.00% as of the first quarter. As this budget item specifically offsets certain capital reserve projects, as the projects are expended, transfers will be made to offset the applicable expenses.

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Expenses General County

Page 12 — Finance/Accounting — this department is slightly over budget having expended 27.35% in the first quarter. This is timing due to audit costs which is a major line item in the finance budget. This budget will level off by years end.

Page 13 — 14 — Information Technology — this budget is at 28.88% spent. Timing of payments for Maintenance contracts impacts the timing of expenses for this department early on. This budget should also level off by years end.

Page 21 — General Government — At 34.51% spent as of the first quarter, insurance payments for the General County Property and Liability Insurance has impacted the acceleration of this budget. This department is expected to come in on target for 2016.

Pages 29 — 30 — Outside Agency's — Due to the timing of the budget passing, no payments are made in the first quarter. All outside agency budgets will be 100% expended by year end.

Page 35 — Bonded Debt — Debt payments are made according to debt payment schedules throughout the year. The principal and interest payments will be fully expended by the end of 2016.

Revenues — Maplewood Nursing Home

Page 36-37 — Overall Maplewood Nursing Home have achieved 22.80% of the 2016 revenue projections (adjusted for timing) which calculates to a current shortfall of approximately \$130,000 at the end of the first quarter. A census of 134 was budgeted for 2016. The current average census to date is 124, with actual census as of today is at 126.

Based on the current average census, the short fall for revenues for 2016 could amount to approximately \$520,000 for 2016 overall.

Expenses — Maplewood Nursing Home

Page 38-55 — Maplewood Departments — Overall expenses for Maplewood are at 24.00% expended (adjusted for timing). This equates to expenses being under budget by approximately \$146,000.

The Administration budget on page 40 which accounts for the 5.5% Bed Tax paid on all Nursing Home revenues is currently under budget by \$32,000. This is a direct result of the revenue shortfall and if the lower census continues, this line item could come in under by approximately \$125,000 by years end.

The nursing home administration, with the support of the nursing home departments, continued to work hard to manage expenses at the lower budgeted census by modifying

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staffing needs when appropriate. As a result, expenses are coming under as of the first quarter by approximately \$145,000. As the budget has only just passed and payroll increases have not been recognized fully, it is expected that expenses overall will accelerate somewhat from what was realized in the first quarter. However there is a possibility that the revenue shortfall may be managed by expenses coming under. This will need to be considered if additional Pro Share funds are received to determine a budget amendment may be needed at that time.

The Commissioners thanked Trombly for her report and the Chair then recognized County Administrator Coates for the Weekly Operations report. Coates reviewed the following items:

He said that on May 18th the first Correctional Officer (CO) Certification packets would be sent to the Commissioners for review and that on May 25th a new CO graduation ceremony will be held in the Delegation meeting room at 12 Court Street.

Coates reminded the Commissioners that the Maplewood Sub-committee would be meeting again on Friday May 13th at 10:00AM at 12 Court Street and that he will be working with the a small group of the sub-committee on preparing materials for the public presentations that will be scheduled later this year.

He then said that the Drug Court will be holding a graduation ceremony on Thursday of this week for two (2) graduates. He said that he would attend and the Commissioners were also invited to attend if their schedules allow.

Coates said that he would be meeting with Congresswoman Kuster later in the day and hoped to learn more about the status of and her support for the TREAT act (H.R.2536). The bill "Amends the Controlled Substances Act to increase the number of patients that a qualifying practitioner dispensing narcotic drugs for maintenance or detoxification treatment is initially allowed to treat from 30 to 100 patients per year".

He then said that he and Bouchard would be meeting with Southwestern Community Services this week to discuss the Second Chance Housing facility.

Coates then said that the RFP's for the farm have been received and reviewed and that the review committee has selected Windyhurst Farms and Michael and Kelly Wright to occupy and lease the farm facilities. Amended lease contracts will be forwarded for review next week.

The Commissioners then reviewed the weekly Census.

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

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The minutes of May 4, 2016 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as amended, and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed.

At 12:58PM 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 unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk