

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, July 23, 2014 9:30AM
Administration Building
33 West Street
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Pratt, Rogers, and Zerba

STAFF: County Administrator Wozmak, Director of Finance Trombly, HR Director Hurley, Superintendent Van Wickler, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

GUESTS: Westmoreland Selectperson J. Hammond, Rep. Chuck Weed, Dale Pregent, Rebeckah Bullock, Southwest Regional Planning

Chairman Pratt opened the meeting at 9:30AM and recognized HR Director Hurley who asked for a non-public session to discuss a matter of personnel.

At 9:31AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Pratt moved to go into non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion or compensation of a public employee or the disciplining of such employee, without that employee having requested an open meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rogers and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of the deliberations in non-public session Commissioner Rogers moved to approve an unpaid leave of absence for V. W. and was the motion was seconded by Commissioner Zerba. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:33AM The Commissioners unanimously voted to return to public session.

Chairman Pratt recognized ACA Bouchard for the purpose of providing the weekly operational update.

Bouchard presented an update on the National Association of Counties Prescription Drug Card Discount program that the County sponsors. Overall the use of the card is trending downward because there are many other competing programs that offer equal or better discounts on prescription drugs.

Bouchard then discussed the Farm Committee meeting scheduled for August 11th at 2:00pm to be held at Maplewood. Bouchard said that the conditions of the two (2) farm hand houses are a concern and will be one of the topics to be discussed at the meeting.

Bouchard then informed the Commissioners of a meeting to be held Thursday July 24th in Concord for the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC). The SIEC is the governing body for the states implementation of the federal FirstNet program that is tasked with creating and delivering a national secure First Responders communications network throughout the county. Rep. Dan Eaton, Sheriff Rivera, and ACA Bouchard have been appointed to the Executive Committee.

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Bouchard then discussed the planned “grand opening” of the new courthouse tentatively planned for September. More details will be provided as information is received from the state courts.

Grants Manager Bansley was then recognized and she presented a request to sign the necessary grant documentation for the Westmill Senior Housing CDBG grant project that was approved by the delegation at the March 17, 2014 delegation meeting. The grant will provide 26 units of low to moderate income housing and construction is targeted to begin in 2015. Following a short discussion and review of the documents, Commissioner Rogers moved to accept and authorize the completion of the grant documentation as voted and passed by the Delegation. Commissioner Zerba seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Pratt then signed the documents and turned them over to Rebeckah Bullock of Southwest Regional Planning.

The motions being prepared for the upcoming Delegation meeting were discussed and Commissioner Pratt asked about preparing motions for the replacement of the underground oil tank at 33 West Street. Director Trombly said she would draft the motions and prepare them for review.

The 2015 Commissioners Budget letter to the County department managers was then discussed and a draft of the letter was reviewed. The previous three (3) flat budget years were discussed and the need to increase some budget areas in 2015 due to rising oil, electric, and commodity costs was discussed. The revamped letter will strongly encourage the department managers to submit as conservative a budget as possible while recognizing the realities of increasing some base operational costs due to increasing in cost of goods over the last four (4) years. Director Trombly will redraft the letter to the department managers and will send the draft to the Commissioners for review.

The Commissioners then reviewed the weekly census and noted the slight decrease in federal inmates being held.

Superintendent Van Wickler was then recognized and he introduced a new intern that is studying both the Department of Corrections and the City of Keene this summer for his classes at Assumption College in Massachusetts.

Commissioner Pratt asked if the DOC was involved in holding inmates for Immigrations and Custom Enforcement (ICE). Van Wickler said that they had not yet been approached by ICE but that he had discussed with ICE officials the opportunity to house detainees at the facility.

The discussion then turned to the DOC training certification process and the use of the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) training academy that is based in Concord. An

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extended discussion began concerning the new rules and requirements that were just passed concerning the Correctional Officer Certification process and the role that Cheshire County has played in providing a majority of the curriculum and instructional staff at the academy over the years.

Superintendent Van Wickler said that due to the changes in the recently passed new certification process the program that has been used by the County for over twenty (20) years has the potential to be no longer recognized by the certification board. Van Wickler reviewed the history of the program and discussed the potential impact of the new rules on the Counties. He discussed several points in the new rules that were contradictory and were potentially at odds with the successful management and organizational development practices used by Cheshire County for many years.

He went on to say that he has two (2) officers that he will submitting for certification as soon as the next correctional officer's academy is announced. He said the August timeframe has been discussed but no firm date has yet been set.

The correctional officer's participation in the state Group II retirement plan was then covered. The state law that requires the Counties to certify the successful completion of the training / certification curriculum for correctional officers to qualify for the Group II retirement plan was discussed.

The Electronic Monitoring (EM) program at DOC was discussed and Superintendent Van Wickler said that the program was proving to be very successfully thus far and only one (1) inmate has absconded while on EM. He went on to point out differences in Cheshire County's EM program vs. other counties and noted that before an inmate can even be considered for EM in Cheshire County they must have served at least one-third (1/3) of their sentence and there must be agreement from the County Attorney's office on the release of the inmate to EM. This is in contrast to only fourteen (14) days of sentenced incarceration as outlined by statute (RSA 651:19) and often no input from their County Attorney's.

The Commissioners reviewed the manifest and **Commissioner Rogers moved to accept the manifest as presented and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Zerba. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Commissioners then reviewed the minutes of July 16, 2014 and Commissioner Zerba moved to amend the minutes to reflect a missing part of a discussion concerning capital projects. The amendment was discussed and ACA Bouchard will amend the minutes and present them for approval at next week's meeting.

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The Commissioners then reviewed the Commissioners Calendar and the Master Item tracking list and made notational changes to the Commissioners Calendar.

Commissioner Pratt then asked the guests in attendance if they had any items for the good of the order. Rep. Weed asked if the Commissioners were aware of the private initiative in the community to provide a continuous care facility in Keene, and wondered if the subject had been discussed by the Commissioners in previous meetings. Commissioner Pratt said that because it is a private enterprise project and does not fall under County jurisdiction the initiative had been noted but no action to participate in the project was planned.

Rep. Weed then asked about the status of the dairy cattle at the farm and was told that the complaint investigation was completed concerning the care of the animals and that the leasee was having the two (2) local veterinarians check the herd each week while they recover from a stomach worm infection.

Lastly, Rep. Weed asked about the state allocation of Proshare funds for the nursing home and was told that the funds had been received and that full details and recommendations would be discussed at the upcoming delegation meeting. (*Prospective Share Payments, also known as Proshare, are annual Medicaid supplemental payments made to each county. New Hampshire receives Federal Medicaid funds based upon the difference between Medicaid payments for nursing home care provided by county facilities and what the payment would have been if the care for those residents had been from Medicare. The federal share, which is half of the total, is divided among the counties.*)

At 10:43AM there being no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Zerba moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Rogers and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

R Zerba, Clerk