

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday February 21, 2018 09:30AM
Maplewood Nursing Home
201 River Road
Westmoreland, NH 03467

Present: Commissioners Peter Graves, Joseph Cartwright, and Charles Weed

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Administrator Kindopp, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guests:

At 9:33AM the Vice-Chair opened the meeting and recognized Conservation Manager Littleton to address Master Agenda Item #564: Semi-Annual Report of the Conservation District.

Littleton described the programs being addressed in 2018 and said that the Conservation District is getting a 16-foot-wide no-till seeder. She said that a number of local dairy farmers have already expressed interest in using the seeder and that she is also working with vegetable farmers who can use the no-till as well. She said that a number of grants are in the works and some of the grants require a 25% match by the farmers.

At 9:35am Commissioner Graves joined the meeting.

In response to a question about the loss of dairy farmers in the area she said that three (3) recent farm closures were noted in the County.

Littleton was then asked about how the rental program for the equipment was handled and she discussed how the no-seed tiller is managed with the various farms and she said that overall the program is working well and the farmers are also cooperating well among themselves in sharing the rental of the equipment.

Littleton described a nutrient control program that is in progress at a local farm that is adjunct to the Connecticut River and she discussed that a project for another culvert replacement project is being researched for the Ashuelot river in Winchester.

IT Director Hummel was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item: #563: New County email server. He provided an overview of the current system and discussed the problems and poor state of the existing email server service.

He then outlined the features and functions of the new system and discussed the added security functions and upgraded feature set that are currently lacking in the existing system.

He said that the rollout of the new system is scheduled to take about a week once implementation begins. The archiving of emails was discussed and how the system will impact the County document management and retention policy was mentioned.

10:14AM Commissioner Cartwright moved to enter 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. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

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As a result of deliberations in non-public session a decision was made and a unanimous vote was taken to pay a recently terminated employee two (2) days of sick leave during the work-out of their termination notice that is restricted under County policy.

At 10:22AM the Commissioners moved unanimously to return to public session.

At 10:23AM Commissioner Graves moved to enter 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. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of deliberations in non-public session a decision was made and a unanimous vote was taken to compensate an employee with fourteen (14) weeks of wages over the normal earned paid time accrued that will be paid out as part of a Reduction-in-Force termination.

A further discussion around wage equity for comparable positions ensued and a number of past situations and examples were reviewed.

At 10:55AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.

Master Agenda Item #562: Leave of Absence Request was then addressed by HR Director May and she discussed a request for non-paid leave to care for a family member who is ill. **Following a short discussion Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the leave-of-absence and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates then asked May to review the exit interview program that is being revamped to be able to gain more information as to why employees leave the employ of the County. She covered the reason for program and described the opportunity for the terminating employee to frankly discuss their reasons for leaving, concerns, as well as discuss their positive experiences.

Administrator Coates was then recognized to discuss the Weekly Operations report.

Coates said that a meeting with the new reporter from the Sentinel was held this week and County operations, right-to-know laws, document retention, and other topics at helped to provide a basis of how the County is structured and operates were discussed. The reporter said that the meeting was very helpful and that she looks forward to working with the County staff.

Coates discussed the upcoming Grand Opening for the Community Corrections center in Merrimack County next Monday and said that he will attend the ceremony following a meeting in Concord.

Coates will be sending out a letter on the Foreign Trade Zone that was discussed a few weeks ago during a Commissioners meeting to the towns and other possibly interested parties to make

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them aware of the possible positive ramifications of using the FTZ to attract new businesses and for established companies to be able to improve their margins by not paying import tariffs. Coates then said that the Old Courthouse windows rehab RFP has been published and ads will be running in Keene Sentinel in the next few days.

He noted that a letter was received about truck traffic using the old bridge in Westmoreland from a local citizen.

Edge Theater will be back in the building in March for another performance. Coates said that the last performance went well and that he will be meeting with the Director later today to review the upcoming series.

Old Business – Commissioner Cartwright asked if any analysis has been received from the Department of Corrections (DOC) concerning an energy audit. Coates said that he will follow-up with Bob Barlow at the DOC to determine the status of the audit.

New Business – The upcoming CDBG meeting for the mid-grant review of the Micro-Enterprise grant that is managed by the County to be held next week was discussed. Events that are scheduled with enough advanced notice will be listed in the Commissioners Master Agenda Items going forward.

The Weekly Census was reviewed and a lengthy discussion concerning the jail population and the federal inmate population was covered.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed and a number of questions were answered concerning invoices paid. At the conclusion of the questions, Commissioner Cartwright moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of February 14, 2018 were then reviewed and Commissioner Cartwright 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.

Commissioners Cartwright asked about the projected fund balance concerning approximately \$94,000.00 was put to the general reserve account. Trombly explained that the monies are needed to maintain the general fund balance at a level that is acceptable to the bond rating agency that partial gauges the financial health of the County on percentage of the monies in the general fund as measured against the total budget of the County.

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At 12:07PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Cartwright moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was then seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
C. Weed