

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday June 20, 2018 09:30AM**  
**County Hall Building**  
**Stillman Rogers Conference Room**  
**12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431**

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

**Staff:** County Administrator Chris Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Grants Manager Bansley, Sheriff Rivera, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

**Guests:** Rebeckah Bullock, Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC), Josh Meehan, Executive Director, Keene Housing, and Linda Mangones, CDBG Administrator, Keene Housing

At 9:30AM the Chairman opened the meeting and recognized Sheriff Rivera who discussed that a public safety radio site run by the Sheriff's department has been invaded by rodents and as a result over \$30,000.00 of damage has occurred to the equipment housed in the building.

At 9:39AM The Chairman then opened the first public hearing for discussion of the CDBG project under Master Agenda Item #593: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application Hearing for the Central Square Apartment Rehab Project.

The Chairman then read the following into the minutes of the Cheshire County Commissioners meeting.

The County Commissioners will hold 2 public hearings on Wednesday, June 20th at 9:30 a.m. at 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 in the second-floor conference room.

The first Public Hearing will discuss an application to the NH Community Development Finance Authority for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. CDBG funds are awarded on a competitive basis in New Hampshire and may be used for housing, public facilities, economic development, and microenterprise projects which have primary benefit to low- and moderate-income people. A municipality can apply for up to \$500,000 in the housing and public facilities category, up to \$500,000 in the economic development category, up to \$500,000 in the microenterprise category, and \$12,000 for feasibility studies.

The proposal to be considered by the Commissioners is a CDBG application to be submitted by Cheshire County on behalf of Keene Housing for up to \$500,000. The funds, less administrative costs, will be loaned to Keene Housing or a related entity to be determined. These funds, in combination with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) funds, will be used for the rehabilitation of Central Square Terrace, located at 5 Central Square, Keene, NH. Central Square Terrace has 90 apartments, all of which are occupied by low and moderate-income residents. This public hearing has been scheduled to provide residents with specific information regarding the grant requirements. A second Public Hearing will be held to adopt the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan specific to this project.

Interested people are invited to attend and comment. Please contact the Cheshire County Commissioner's Office, (603) 352-8215 or via Relay NH at 1-800-735-2964, in advance if you have a disability and need assistance to attend or participate in the hearing. Anyone wishing to submit written comments prior to the hearing should address them to the Cheshire County Commissioners, 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431.

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The Chair then recognized Rebeckah Bullock, Community Development Specialist, with SWRPC explained that Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facility and housing rehabilitation projects that primarily benefit low and moderate-income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 a year for public facility/housing rehabilitation, up to \$500,000 a year for economic development projects, as well as up to \$500,000 a year in emergency funds. Feasibility Study funds are available for up to \$12,000.00.

Rebeckah Bullock provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that included the area HUD income limits and she also provided a project handout.

The proposal to be considered by the Commissioners is a CDBG application to be submitted by Cheshire County on behalf of Keene Housing for up to \$500,000.00. The funds, less administrative costs, will be loaned to Keene Housing and a related entity that has been identified as CST Housing Associates L.P. These funds, in combination with Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) funds, will be used for the rehabilitation of Central Square Terrace, located at 5 Central Square, Keene, NH. The total project budget is estimated at \$13.5 million, including acquisition and rehabilitation. Central Square Terrace has 90 apartments, all of which are occupied by low and moderate-income elderly and disabled residents.

Joshua Meehan of Keene Housing was then recognized and presented a request that Cheshire County submit an application for CDBG funds on its behalf to be used for the rehabilitation of Central Square Terrace in downtown Keene. The application would be for \$500,000 of which at least \$470,000 would be used for rehabilitation costs and the remaining funds for administration. Applications for CDBG funds are due July 30, 2018.

Although Keene Housing is the sponsor of the project, the actual subrecipient of the funds would be a new Limited Partnership (currently unnamed) which will purchase the property from the Limited Partnership (Central Square Housing Associates) which currently owns it. The new Limited Partnership will undertake the rehabilitation.

Central Square Terrace was developed in 1983 by combining the historic Colony Block with a newly constructed building along Roxbury Street. It has 90 apartments for low-income elderly and disabled persons. All apartments are subsidized, which means that no tenant pays more than 30% of monthly income for rent, which includes all utilities. This will continue to be the case after the rehabilitation project is completed.

Now 35 years old, this property has a number of capital improvement needs, including: the need for a significant overhaul of its heating and ventilation system; restoration of deteriorating historic Central Square façade; refurbishing the apartments with new cabinets, equipment, fixtures, lighting, and flooring; replacing bathroom fixtures with more accessible fixtures; additional laundry facilities; photovoltaic array; and improvements to interior and exterior common areas. The cost of this work is estimated at \$5 - \$6 million.

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The total cost of the project is in the \$13 million range. This includes acquisition of the property, bonding and other financing fees, temporary relocation of tenants as their apartments are upgraded, development and professional fees, and required establishment of larger reserves.

Most of the funding would be obtained through New Hampshire Housing Finance Authority (NHHFA). Funding sources include: tax exempt bonds, 4% Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), equity and loans to the project from Keene Housing, CDBG funds, and other smaller sources.

He spoke to the work that needs to be completed and said that although the first-floor façade has been updated none of the upper floors have been touched since the 1980's. He also discussed the financing model that is set-up for the sixteen (16) year term of the financing project.

Meehan said that design is already underway and construction is expected to start in early 2019 and to continue for 12-15 months.

The Chair opened the floor to public comments and questions about the proposed CDBG project, upon hearing no comments the Chair then opened the floor to staff and commissioners for comment.

Commissioner Graves moved to close the Public Hearing on the Project portion of the CDBG Block Grant Hearing.

**Commissioner Cartwright made a motion to approve the submittal of the application and vote to authorize the AUTHORIZED DESIGNEE (Chair of the County Commissioners or County Administrator) to sign and submit the CDBG application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the AUTHORIZED DESIGNEE to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. 3 in favor. 3 to 0. Motion passed.**

Commissioner Graves opened the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

Rebeckah Bullock of SWRPC explained that if any displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any displaced household or business in a project using federal funds must be found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price.

Bullock noted that displacement is anticipated for the proposed project. Because of the nature of the proposed project, temporary relocation of residents will be required in stages during construction. Most residents will be relocated within the building. Some residents will be temporarily relocated to other Keene Housing properties, and their rent will remain the same during relocation. The project will hire a Relocation Specialist to work with tenants during planning, help tenants pack, help arrange for transfer of utilities, and pay for all costs of relocation. Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place, and a displacement implementation plan will be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

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The Chair then opened the floor to public comment on the projects.

Hearing no public comments, Commissioner Graves moved to close the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed RARA Plan.

**Commissioner Cartwright moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Weed. 0 in favor. 3 to 1. Motion passed.**

Grants Manager Bansley was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #594: HRSA Rural Health Network Sub-award for MVP. Bansley asked the Commissioners to vote to accept and sign a contract for a \$30,000.00 sub-award, on behalf of Monadnock Voices for Prevention.

The sub-award originates from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Rural Health Network Grant, that was awarded to Cheshire Medical Center, and is passed through to MVP. The funds will be used to promote awareness for prescription drug misuse and ways to lower use of controlled substances and decrease the use of stigmatizing language in the region. The grant term is 6/15/18 to 6/30/19.

The Commissioners asked questions about the use of the funds and the effectiveness of the marketing programs.

**Commissioner Cartwright moved to accept the Rural Health Care Services Outreach, Rural Health Network Grant for \$30,000.00 and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Paul Cuno-Booth the new reporter from the Keene Sentinel was then introduced to the Commissioners and staff.

Commissioner Graves then recognized Administrator Coates for his weekly report.

Coates said that the opiate lawsuit was reviewed by the County Attorney who made one change to language that further protects the County's legal interest by requiring the lawsuit attorneys to review the final lawsuit language with the County before the County formally signs on a co-complainant.

Following questions, the document for taking the first step toward joining the lawsuit was then signed by the Commissioners.

Coates then presented a renewal for the purchasing authorization document for surplus federal goods and services. Following a short discussion, the Commissioners signed the renewal documentation.

Coates then said that the New Hampshire Association of Counties holds a seat on the NH State Retirement Board that has become vacant and he is being considered for the position. He has asked the NHAC to open the position to other candidates but if no one steps forward he is willing to represent the Association.

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Coates then said that the roof for the administration building is anticipated to begin next week and will be followed by the installation of the new carpet in the lobby's, hallways, and some office areas. He also mentioned that the Request for Proposals (RFP) was released for the replacement of the old vinyl windows at the 33 West Street building is now in the bid period.

He then said that the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Summer Concert sessions will be beginning next week on Wednesday at noon.

Coates then discussed the Old Department of Corrections demolition project underway in Westmoreland and said that the ravine should be empty of all materials by the end of the day and that the final burial in the designated land fill site should be complete by the end of next week.

He then discussed the cost overrun and reviewed the possible use of some funds from the federal inmate income to cover the budget for the project that is significantly exceeding budget projections due to the extra work required by the State DES.

He said that he will be sending a letter to the Commissioner of the DES thanking them for working with us to mitigate the issues that occurred at the Old Jail site and for their support and assistance in handling a difficult situation and bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion.

Coates asked Commissioner Weed to review the recent NHAC Officers meeting about the leadership issues within the organization. Commissioner Weed said that the meeting was very cordial and went very well and that the discussion of revamping the organizational and financial structure will continue.

Coates said that he has invited a telecommunications health company to present an overview of their program of home monitoring for seniors and those with significant health issues to the July 18<sup>th</sup> Commissioners meeting. The impact of the program is said to be that about 70% of the users are staying in their homes much longer than those without the resources provided by the program.

Coates informed the Commissioners that in response to their request that he has discussed the possible acquisition of a second electric stream kettle for the Department of Corrections kitchen in order to be able to remove the current large and expensive to operate steam boiler for the one remaining stream kettle.

Coates then said that an additional contribution of \$2,500.00 for the rehabilitation of the old courthouse windows has been received. He said that a meeting with the window vendor yesterday went very well and the overall costs are being looked at by the vendor and the two (2) options are being further reviewed.

He then said that on July 11<sup>th</sup> the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Executive Director will attend a meeting at 2:00pm with Coates and Tim Murphy of the Southwestern Regional Planning Commission to discuss the possible addition of a local economic development coordinator that is already supported in seven (7) other Counties throughout the state.

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Coates then said that the Northern Borders Regional Commission program that lists Cheshire County as a recipient has moved out of the Senate committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and will proceed forward in the final Bill.

He then discussed that a portion of the \$100,000.00 to be received from the Integrated Delivery Network (IDN) program that is a formal system of providers and sites of care that provides both health care services and a health insurance plan to patients in a defined geographic area, will be used for the proposed Cheshire County Home Handyman program. More details will be forthcoming as the program is rolled out.

Coates then said that the newly proposed County Document Retention program documentation was reviewed by the County Attorney and some changes were made to the Right-to-Know Request form that will be published in the coming weeks. A meeting with the County IT Director is being arranged and he has reached out to the City of Keene IT Director for input.

Old Business – Commissioner Cartwright asked about the status of the bio-mass project. Coates said that Maplewood Owners Representative Steve Horton is still waiting on receiving the numbers from the engineering team but will send out the data once it is received.

New Business – No new business was discussed.

The Weekly Census was then reviewed.

**The minutes of June 6, 2018 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed. moved to accept the minutes as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed with questions from Commissioner Cartwright. 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 calendar was then reviewed and Commissioner Cartwright moved to cancel the July 5<sup>th</sup> meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**General Discussion** – No general discussion items.

**At 11:33 Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) Commissioner Cartwright moved to enter non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of discussions in non-public session Commissioner Weed moved to have the County cover a retirement system shortfall of approximately \$1,000.00 for a small subset of employees**

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**who have been paid funds incorrectly under a misunderstanding of the retirement system rules. Commissioner Cartwright seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**At 11:44AM the Commissioner voted unanimously to return to public session.**

**At 11:45AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) Commissioner Weed moved to enter non-public session to discuss consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against this board or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Commissioner Cartwright seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of discussions in non-public session no vote was taken and no decision was made.**

**At 11:52AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.**

Coates related that a Department of Corrections vehicle was involved in an accident last week. The insurance company has totaled the vehicle and a check in the amount of \$8,500.00 has been received from the insurance company (Primex).

**At 11:57AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was then seconded by Commissioner Cartwright and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Weed  
Clerk, Board of Commissioners