

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, August 21, 2019
Department of Corrections
825 Marlboro Road
Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners: Charles Weed, and Robert Englund (John Wozmak absent w/ notice)

Staff: County Attorney McLaughlin, IT Director Hummel, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guest(s):

At 8:30AM Chairman Weed opened the meeting and recognized IT Director Hummel to review the requirements for IT equipment to be authorized to be purchased as a single source request.

Hummel discussed the acquisition of new phone equipment and said that he had directly solicited five bids for Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone handsets and that the bids range from \$167.88 to \$52.19 for each unit.

Hummel responded to questions concerning the warranties on the recommend low bidders refurbished handsets and he said that even though the phones are considered refurbished the warranties are the same as new phones.

Following discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the purchase of the equipment from Refurbished Phone Exchange of 220 Paramount Drive, Suite 1 Raynham, MA for \$8,278.43. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

County Attorney McLaughlin was then recognized and discussed Master Agenda Item #703: County Attorney Semi-Annual Report. McLaughlin presented the following report to the Commissioners:

From 1/1/2019 to 6/30/2019

The Cheshire County Attorney's Office has had a number of personnel changes in this six-month period. On March 11, 2019, Shanna Beckwith took over as the Circuit Court prosecutor, following the departure of Jim Seeman. Long-time domestic violence prosecutor David Lauren retired on March 15, 2019, and prosecutor Jean Kilham assumed the role of domestic violence prosecutor. The vacancy created with David's departure was filled by Keene Police Department Circuit Court prosecutor Eleanor Moran, and her position as prosecutor for the Keene Police Department was filled by newly-hired prosecutor Alexander Gatzoulis. Katrina Mabe went out on maternity leave on May 13th, and this office was fortunate to hire former Americorps volunteer Natalie Haley to assume many of Katrina's duties in her absence. Lastly, former Keene Police Lieutenant James McLaughlin started working in this office as a part-time investigator on April 16, 2019.

During this six-month period, 174 felony case files were referred to our office, and a Victim/Witness Coordinator was assigned to all of these cases. We have indicted 113 individuals, on a total of 285 charges. There were 5 cases that proceeded to trial, and two misdemeanor appeals. 110 cases were resolved prior to trial, by plea. The County Attorney reviewed 64 DCYF reports. Further, our office handled 70 Violations of Probation on 60 cases, and 14 Superior Court Petitions to Annul.

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Over the past 6 months at any given time there have been 23 participants in the Cheshire County Drug Court Program. Currently there are 20 participants in the Cheshire County Drug Court program, with 4 participants entering the program within the last 6 months, 2 participants graduating and 2 participants terminated from the program. We also have 2 applicants who will be admitted within the next month.

Lastly, the Domestic Violence Prosecutor reviewed 11 Felony Domestic Violence cases this period. A Victim Witness Coordinator was assigned to each of those cases.

A discussion of the Restorative Justice program and the issue that currently only one participant is in the program was covered. McLaughlin said that part of the problem with the lack of potential participants is that the program is focused on very low-level infractions (fineable violations) where it is easier to just pay a fine and not be involved in a lengthy restorative process. He said that the higher misdemeanor and felony crimes where jail time can be avoided through a diversion program such as restorative justice would be the only way to immediately add more people but the program is currently not open to that level of charges.

Further discussions about opiate usage and other crime statistics were covered and the Commissioners then thanked McLaughlin for his report.

Bouchard then presented the Weekly Operations report.

Bouchard said that the roof of the outdoor pavilion at Maplewood is pending replacement and that the Maplewood Facilities Director had posted the project for bids. He said that five (5) firms were sent the information but only two firms responded to the bid request and one of the bids was \$5,300 over the budgeted amount. The second bid was \$2.17 under the budgeted amount and it was recommended by the Maplewood Facilities Director to accept the bid and begin the work as-soon-as-possible. **Following discussion Commissioner Weed moved to award the bid to Haakon Construction Services Inc., of Spofford, NH and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Bouchard then brought the Commissioners up to date on two active personnel issues said that one staff member had returned to work on Monday and the other staff member will have a hearing on September 9th concerning their case.

He also said that a department managers refresher training on personnel issues will be held on the afternoon of September 9th to discuss and review required HR documentation procedures and the application of RSA 28:10A and federal Loudermill rules as they pertain to employment in County governments.

Bouchard then said that the first client for the Handyman program has been approved and a second applicant is pending. He said that the local newspaper has expressed an interest in doing an article on the program.

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Bouchard then reminded that Commissioners that the State Attorney Generals office will be holding a meeting to discuss the pending opiate litigation on August 27th from 2:00 – 4:00PM in Concord.

Bouchard said that the meeting with the Westmoreland Planning Board and Eversource has been postponed due the unavailability of one of the key Eversouce staff. The meeting will be rescheduled in the near future.

Bouchard then related that two possible requests for use of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding have been made and only one can be accommodated this year due to federal rules. Discussion with the applicants will occur over the course of the next few weeks.

He then discussed that a shortage of personnel in the dietary department at Maplewood has become an issue and that the Human Resources department is working diligently to fill the positions as quickly as possible.

He also said that the open Human Resources Generalist position has a number of applicants and that interviewing will begin shortly.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

The Weekly Census was then reviewed and the report was accepted as informational.

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

The minutes of August 14, 2019 were then discussed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The calendar was then reviewed and no changes were noted.

At 10:28AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. A. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
R. Englund, Clerk