

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, December 4, 2019, 2019
Department of Corrections
825 Marlboro Road, Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners: Charles Weed, Robert Englund and John Wozmak

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Assistant Director of Finance Hall, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guests:

At 9:35AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and recognized Administrator Coates for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that he had completed a call concerning the Integrated Delivery Networks (IDN) yesterday and he conveyed to the group that the Commissioners and Delegation have approved an annual IDN payment using the formula presented at previous meetings. He also said that if the other Counties chose not use the formula and instead fall back to the last years funding level then Cheshire County would be forced to do the same. He then outlined the various positions of the other counties and said that the total revenues from all counties is calculated to be \$6.7M. Coates said that he has asked to meet with Sullivan and Grafton Counties to explore the continuation of the Region 1 IDN and to specifically discuss sustainability issues in the event that as funding terminates at the federal level the Region 1 IDN could continue to deliver services. He explained the various options that are available and the Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning how the program would continue under reduced funding.

The start-up of the new program “The Doorway at Cheshire Medical Center” project in Keene at 640 Marlboro Street and its move to Railroad Street was discussed.

Coates then said that the Keene Arts and Culture Charette is being held in Delegation Hall today. The Commissioners are invited to attend.

Coates then reminded the Commissioners that a Delegation meeting is set for next Monday evening at 7:00pm where the Commissioners will turn over the Commissioners 2020 proposed budget. The Commissioners discussed the budget allocations and the recommendations that are being forwarded to the delegation for review.

Coates said that a Restorative Justice meeting will be held at 4:00pm on December 10th. In January another meeting will be scheduled to further the conversation and to continue the program.

The Commissioners were then reminded that the Commissioners meeting on December 11th will be held at the Maplewood Nursing Home and that employee longevity awards will be presented at the conclusion of the meeting at noon.

Coates then said that the Maplewood Phase I project is on-track and the commissioning of the new wing is on-target. He said that the new wing is being readied to begin receiving staff in January.

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He then said that the latest Drug Court graduation ceremony is next Tuesday the 10th at 12:00pm at the new Courthouse on the 2nd floor.

Coates said that Steve Fournier of Keene State College informed him that a presentation will be given at 10:30am on the 10th at Keene State on “Building Hope and Ending Homelessness in the Community”. Some of the Commissioners will try to attend.

Coates then discussed the pending Opiate lawsuit and said 60% of the Counties in the state have opted-out and the other four Counties have chosen to stay in the suit.

Coates said that a meeting has been setup for 3:00 today with county staff to review a grant that is available to support a program that is called “Assisted Outpatient program for Severe Mental Illness”.

Coates then said that at a recent meeting in the office space used by Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention (MCVP), the County, MCVP staff and DEW construction discussed ways to renovate the office space that is beginning to show extreme wear. He said that the county has allocated \$10,000 for the work and DEW will cover the remaining cost of the work estimated to be an additional \$20,000.

He then spoke to the Opiate lawsuit status and described that work that is being done concerning the bankruptcy filing of the some of the drug distributors. He said that the gathering of detailed information on the cost impacts to the Counties was also underway and that Cheshire County has already fully complied with the request.

A discussion of the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) meeting on Friday in Concord was then covered and the way that NHAC yearly dues are assessed was covered.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Trombly was then recognized and reviewed the 3rd Quarter Financial Review that will be presented to the Executive Committee on December 9th. The following is the letter that will be formally presented to the Delegation that evening:

To: Cheshire County Executive Committee

From: Sheryl Trombly, Finance Director

Date: December 9, 2019

RE: 3rd quarter 2019 Budget Review

At the end of the third quarter, revenues adjusted for the collection of taxes and timing for the receipt of other revenues have reached 75.12% of the General County budgeted revenues with the Nursing Home having achieved 75.54%. As revenues should be at 75%, this indicates that

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revenues are running just slightly short for the General County and Nursing Home. The totals combined are under by approximately \$114,000.

At the end of the third quarter, expenses are under budget by approximately \$1,155,000 after adjusting for major items that have not been expended due to timing. Overall county expenses are at 73.20% spent and Maplewood having expended 72.32% of their appropriated budget.

As you review the third 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 17th for 2019.

Page 1 – Grant Reimbursement line items – Federal Grants Reimbursement as well as Non Federal Grants Reimbursements combined have achieved approximately 59% of budgeted revenues. These revenues are offset by expenses so any shortfall would have a direct impact on expenses coming under as well.

Page 2 – Sheriff Fees overall are at 52% realized as of the third quarter. Funds were allocated for the hiring of a deputy to be designated for the Drug Task Force. As this position has not been filled, much of this shortfall will be covered by payroll expenses as a result of the vacancy for this position. Additionally, the contract for Richmond that was budgeted as of April 1, 2019 did not start until June, 2019.

Page 2 – Overall DOC revenues are running under at 72% received. Federal Inmates revenues are running slightly short of budget projections with the other areas such as work release, electronic monitoring also coming under as of September 30th. The 2019 census is budgeted for 41 Federal Inmates. As of today, the current census is at 42 with an average of 40.

Page 3 – Interest on Investments – This line has already exceeded projections and will likely go over by approximately \$100,000.00. Although interest rates have started to lower, we were able to invest at higher rates for the majority of 2019.

Page 4 – Jaffrey District Court Lease – This budget line is at 6.29% of its projected revenues at the end of the third 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.

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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 third quarter. This budget item specifically offsets certain capital reserve projects. A year end entry will be made to offset the applicable expenses.

Expenses General County

Page 8 – Prosecutor Grant – This budget is at 76.72% spent. This is due to the retirement of a long-term employee of which accrued vacation time was paid out at retirement. As we account for our accrued leave liability in our financials, the entry that is done at year- end will offset some of the overage being recognized in 2019.

Page 19 – Contingency – The contingency line as of September has gone over by \$4,160. One of the largest items posted was \$40,000 paid to Eversource as our contribution towards an overall project of nearly \$280,000 that included the paving of the parking lot as well as receiving new main feeds into 33 West Street. As previously reported, it was known this one single item would put us over the \$50,000 budget. However, we did not feel a budget amendment was needed as Maplewood had a \$40,000 contingency line allocation that has not been used at all for 2019. Additional expenses charged to this contingency include \$5,400 for replacement of the Court House AC unit, \$1,414 to replace the card reader system at the Latchis parking lot (this expense was offset by an insurance claim received from the City of Keene) and \$7,346 for the rebuilding of the emergency generator at the Court House.

Page 20 – General Government – This budget is at 88% spent. This also is due to the retirement of a long-term employee of which accrued vacation time was paid out at retirement. As we account for our accrued leave liability in our financials, the entry that is done at year- end will offset some of the overage being recognized in 2019.

Page 28 – Human Services (Medicaid Expense) – This budget covers the County contribution towards the cost of County Residents living in Nursing Homes and Home and Community based Care and supported by Medicaid. The County is responsible for 100% of the nonfederal share. At the end of the 3rd quarter it would appear the budget would go slightly over by year end. However, this budget will level off by year end.

In addition, this budget includes funding for the handy man program. The county is working with Southwest Community Services and other local referral agencies to identify low income individuals that could use alterations to their living conditions that would allow them to continue to live at home with the hopes to keep them out of needing nursing home care. This program is brand new with referrals starting to be made.

Revenues – Maplewood Nursing Home

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Page 36- Overall adjusted for timing, Maplewood Nursing Home has achieved 75.54% of the 2019 revenue projections. A census of 130 was budgeted for 2019 and as of September 30th the average census was 123. As you may recall, due to the lower census, an amendment was made in August, 2019 with ProShare Funds to reduce the Nursing Home revenues by approximately \$641,000. This amendment will result in the Nursing Home coming close to hitting revenue projections for 2019.

With the newly amended budget, revenues are currently falling slightly short by \$69,000.

Expenses – Maplewood Nursing Home

Page 37-53 – Maplewood Departments – Overall expenses for Maplewood are at 72.32% expended (adjusted for timing). This equates to expenses being under budget by approximately \$589,000.

As you review the nursing home departments you will find that nearly all are well within or well under budgeted expenses.

The Administration budget on page 40 which accounts for the 5.5% Bed Tax paid on all Nursing Home revenues is currently at 79% expended. This current overage is based on the timing of the bed tax payments as well as the excess bed tax paid on the higher Pro Share funds received. This department will level off and come in on budget by year-end.

Furthermore, there are certain line items in the nursing budget that are considerably over budget such as contracted nursing registry lines for RN's and LPN's and LNA's. Due to the shortage of nurses and LNA's, we have had to rely more heavily on contracted agency nursing services to provide additional staffing. However even with the support of the outside agencies there is still a shortfall of nurses and LNA's. The overages on these particular line items are more than covered by the shortfall on actual payroll lines where staff wages are not being expended.

As previously reported, we continue to put a great deal of effort in being creative to find ways to be competitive in recruiting and retaining nurses as well as other support staff at the nursing home. Maplewood has hosted several LNA classes that have been successful in the career development for some of our own staff in order to help obtain their LNA. Although this is a slow process, it is just one of the continued efforts being made to address the shortage being faced.

There will be a meeting of the Executive Committee on Monday December 9, 2019 immediately following the 7:00pm Delegation meeting at County Hall, 12, Court Street to review this report as well as to receive the 2020 budget packets and establish the Executive Committee Budget review schedule.

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Trombly reviewed the letter and the Commissioners asked about a line item concerning the number of individuals on electronic monitoring. A Department of Corrections staff member joined the meeting and explained how the electronic monitoring program works.

Director Trombly was then recognized to present the Commissioners letter to Treasurer to attend the December 9, 2019 Executive Committee meeting.

Following review of the letter, **Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the Director of Finance to send notification of the December 9, 2019 Delegation meeting to the County Treasurer requesting their presence for the purpose of meeting RSA requirements for the establishment of the yearly Tax Anticipated Note (TAN) that funds County operations. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously**

Consent Agenda Items:

1. Manifest
2. Minutes of November 20, 2019

Following review and discussion, Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Englund then brought up an additional item for New Business citing a recent conversation with a Selectboard member in Roxbury. He said that Roxbury cannot obtain information from Avitar Associates who completes town real estate assessments because Avitar stated that they cannot now get the information from the Register of Deeds. Administrator Coates will follow-up with the Register of Deeds to better understand the issue.

At 11:36AM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak, and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
R. Englund, Clerk