

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, February 05, 2020
Maplewood Nursing Home
Executive Conference Room
201 River Road, Westmoreland, NH 03467

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

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

Guests: Attorney Adam Kossayda, Bragdon & Kossayda, P.C.

At 8:30AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and recognized Dr. Douglas Keene the Medical Director for the Nursing Home. Commissioner Englund introduced Dr. Keene who provided his background and spoke of his transition from Cheshire Medical to Maplewood as the part-time medical director.

A wide ranging conversation concerning the use of medications in nursing homes and the overall staffing that needs to be added to bring services up to full function.

The Commissioners thanked Dr. Keene for attending the meeting and invited him to return on a regular basis to discuss any issues that he feels are pertinent.

Commissioner Wozmak was recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #743: EMS Letter and Recognition Certificate.

Wozmak provided an overview of a draft letter which follows:

Dear Colleagues and Constituents,

In nearly every town in Cheshire County, the local fire and emergency medical service response is performed by volunteers. To be sure, there are a couple paid fire personnel in a few towns, but when the situation gets serious and more hands are needed, the call goes out to the volunteer fire fighters and the volunteer emergency responders, such as MT's. These volunteers pay for virtually all of their own training, on their own time and work hard to remain competent providers of emergency services for us.

It has become very difficult to find new volunteers and this has created a shortage of firefighters and emergency responders. Compounding this, many current firefighters and emergency responders currently work out of town and are unable to respond to emergencies within their towns during the normal work hours. New recruits are difficult to find as the thousands of dollars and hundreds of training hours present obstacles too high to overcome.

These emergency volunteers care about being a strong, productive and helpful members of our communities. All of this commitment so that we can rest easy in our homes, businesses, schools and on our roadways knowing that if a disaster or medical emergency strikes, there will be someone there to help us survive and to protect our valuable property.

So, imagine how these emergency volunteers feel when the alarm sounds while they are at work and their employer requires them to 'punch out' before responding. Here they are willing to

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literally risk their lives to help those in our communities but before they can do that, they have to punch out to respond to the alarm. In many instances, not only must the volunteer finance their own training to earn the credentials they need to volunteer; but now they must lose wages as they help others.

As County Commissioners, we have been gently feeling our way towards identifying what role County Government can play to ease the strain on local communities and our citizens that suffer from the shortage of volunteers able to respond to emergencies. We are evaluating options that range from regional grant opportunities to funding/supporting paid services to help limit the impact of too few volunteers and too many emergency calls for service.

We believe that local employers can do a few things to help us be safe at work and home:

- 1. Commit to paying volunteers for their normal work day if, per chance, they need to respond to an emergency.*
- 2. Offer company-sponsored training opportunities for employees to learn to be First Responders, EMT's and Fire Fighters. Be willing to support the efforts of your employees to provide emergency help in your community.*
- 3. Establish your own internal first responder crew so that if your company or your employees need emergency services, your own people can help until reinforcements arrive.*
- 4. Become an advocate for employer-support of your town fire/EMS agency to promote cooperation and understanding between employers and fire/EMS volunteer employees.*
- 5. Develop and promote a supportive work environment for volunteers in your town through outreach, recognition and educational opportunities that increase the awareness of how critical fire and EMS volunteers are to our families, employees, homes, corporate buildings and our roadways.*
- 6. Take the pledge! Pledge your support by posting the enclosed poster in your establishment. Encourage others in the business community to join you in your support.*
- 7. If we want our communities to be strong and vibrant, we need to all work together to support our local emergency agencies. Please join us, as employers, as we work together to encourage more of our neighbors and co-workers to become a volunteer in our community by supporting volunteer efforts, training and service.*

Thank you in advance for your efforts at making our community a better place to work, live and play.

A wide ranging conversation began concerning Fire and Police staffing and emergency volunteer emergency services in the County that are in dire need of added volunteer participants and paid staff was had.

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At 10:08AM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) Commissioner Weed moved to enter non-public session to discuss the 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 Englund seconded the motion.

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

At 11:08AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report.

Coates said that the Maplewood residents will begin to move into the new wing today after a number of issues that needed to be worked out with the state and local authorities were resolved. He provided a list of items and said that the final building readiness issues have been addressed.

Coates reminded the Commissioners of NHAC Primex meeting on Friday. A meeting with Usource will also take place following the main meeting between Coates and Bouchard to explore Community Power Aggregation issues..

Coates said that the expansion grant for the System of Care program has been submitted and has been officially accepted for review by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) which is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A discussion of the proposed 2020 budget currently under review with the Delegation Executive Committee began and a number of issues and their financial impact were covered in depth.

Coates said that he still does not have clarity on the future funding of the Region 1 Integrated Delivery Network (IDN) funding. Review of the current funding situation was discussed and how the funding flow from the state back the IDN's works was covered.

Old Business: Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the County Administrator to re-join the New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimous.

New Business:

The Consent Agenda Items which include the Weekly Manifests and the minutes of January 15, 2020 were then taken-up. Commissioner Wozmak to accept the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

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The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed.

At 12:27PM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Weed, and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:

R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:

R. Englund, Clerk