

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 12, 2020**  
**Department of Corrections**  
**825 Marlboro Road**  
**Keene, NH 03431**

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

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Director of Finance Trombly, Grants Manager S. Bansley, D. Iosue, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

**Guests:**

At 8:30AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and recognized Bansley for the purpose of discussing Master Agenda Item #744: Rural Emergency Medical Services Training Grant. She explained the process for applying for the grant and discussed some possible ways to implement the program that will allow an EMS agency to receive \$200,000 a year for four years to improve Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and acquire equipment.

A discussion concerning scope and activities of the grant was covered and ways in which the County could be able to provide administrative support for the grant was reviewed in great detail.

It was agreed that Bansley will re-canvas the County towns with a focused synopsis of the grant to gauge interest.

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report

Coates said that he had a meeting with SWMA to discuss a meeting in March with the all the towns Fire Chiefs in the County. February 25<sup>th</sup> is currently scheduled as an all-hands meeting for all Mutual Aid towns and will be held in Keene. Coates will attend. He also offered the use of the Delegation Hall for meeting and the County employee parking lots for meetings that would be held in the evenings when staff has left for the evening.

Coates said that next week a tour of the Monadnock Family Services (MFS) will take place at 9:00AM next Wednesday during the Commissioners meeting.

He said that a letter has been sent to the State for review concerning the purchase of the 33 Winter Street building. The closing is now scheduled for February 21<sup>st</sup>. Coates and Trombly will also attend a meeting with the Keene city council to answer any questions concerning the closing and the on-going financing package.

At 9:33AM Master Agenda Item #743: Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MAT) Status Update was taken-up and Doug Iosue was recognized.

Iosue handed out a policy document that has been developed and he also handed out a 2019 Summary and Statistics document as shown below:

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***Cheshire County DOC***  
***Medication Assisted Treatment***  
***2019 Summary & Statistics***

***Total Cases on any type/category of MAT: 82***

*Continued on methadone: 16*

*Continued initially on methadone; then switched to Soboxone pre-release: 7*

*Continued on Soboxone after verification of community-based MAT: 31*

*Started on Soboxone as a new MAT case pre-release: 26*

*Subutex taper to manage severe opioid withdrawal: 2*

***Total Cases referred to post release MAT appointment: 71***

*Unplanned releases (no referral): 5*

*Tapered off MAT prior to release: 1*

***Of 71 scheduled MAT appointments:***

*Showed: 66 (92.9%)*

*Did not show: 5 (7.1%)*

***Disposition/Receiving Agency:***

*Keene Metro Clinic: 25*

*Groups Recover Together: 15*

*Phoenix House Keene: 10*

*Cheshire Medical Center: 9*

*Better Life Partners: 5*

*West Ridge Center (Rutland VT): 2*

*Clean Slate: 2*

*Habit Opco Brattleboro: 1*

*Community Improvement Associates: 1*

*Farnum Center: 1*

*Antrim House: 1*

*Conn Valley Recovery: 1*

He said that Vivitrol as an addiction medication is now being offered for use for inmates at the Department of Corrections. He spoke of the types and use of Vivitrol, Methadone, and Soboxone use in the Medicated Assisted Treatment at the facility.

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He then addressed the statistics document and spoke of the details to qualify to participate in the programs referenced in the handout.

He said that Vermont Federal inmates are also participating as the State of Vermont has instituted the use of Vivitrol in the State prisons and jails and can continue the program if they are housed at the County Department of Corrections.

A discussion of the types of drugs that are the most effective in Medicated Assisted Treatment and how treatment paths are decided on a case by case basis. The company that makes Vivitrol offers the DOC a single dose for inmates being released from the facility. Medicaid will then cover the cost of the use of the drug after they are released.

The Commissioners thanked Iosue for his presentation and at 10:04AM Master Agenda Item #746: Fiscal Year-End Review was taken-up for review.

Trombly presented the following Year-End synopsis letter and discussed the details of the numbers with the Commissioners.

*To: Cheshire County Commissioners*  
*From: Sheryl Trombly, Finance Director*  
*Date: February 12, 2020*  
*RE: 4th quarter 2019 Budget Review*

*At the end of 2019, pre audit revenues ended at 2.05%, (\$760,908) remain for the County and Nursing Home revenues came in at 2.68%, \$393,237 over projections. The totals combined are a shortfall of (\$367,671). This shortfall is mainly due to grants that were not awarded. Expenses that were budgeted to expend these potential grants came in under as well offsetting the revenue shortfall.*

*At the end of 2019, pre audit expenses ended with a combined excess of \$2,158,703. Overall county expenses ended at 5.15%, \$1,558,006 under budget with Maplewood at 2.80%, \$600,697.*

*The combined year end surplus is estimated at \$1,791,032.*

*The total fund balance committed in the 2020 budget is proposed at \$1,583,096. Of this amount, \$500,000 is from ProShare funds received in 2019 with the additional \$1,083,096 from the current year end surplus.*

*The County has a policy that recommends maintaining an unassigned fund balance in the range of 11% to 15%. At the end of 2018, the unassigned fund balance was \$7,046,207. This represented 13.63% of the 2019 County Budget.*

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*Based on the current year end projections and the proposal to assign \$1,583,096 of fund balance to offset taxes for 2020, the estimated 2019 accumulated unassigned fund balance will be approximately \$7,181,143. Based on the 2020 budget as it currently stands, this unassigned fund balance would represent 13.81% of the overall county budget.*

The Commissioners reviewed the letter and a discussion of the up-coming meeting on Monday February 17<sup>th</sup> with the Executive Committee was had. As a follow-on to this discussion Master Agenda Item #745: Fund Balance Policy Review was then reviewed and the existing policy was discussed and the Commissioners were asked if they wished to make any adjustments.

A lengthy discussion and review began following which **Commissioner Wozmak moved to change the fund balance range from 11% to 15% to 12% to 16% based on anticipated future financial impacts to the County budget. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The language changes will be reflected in an updated document that will be published by the Director of Finance and the document follows:

***GENERAL PRACTICE: ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE  
OF CHESHIRE COUNTY'S GENERAL FUND FUND***

***June 22, 2011***

***Updated: February 10, 2016***

***PURPOSE AND SCOPE***

*The County will maintain reservations of Fund Balance in accordance with Governmental Accounting Standards Board Statement No. 54, Fund Balance Reporting and Governmental Fund Type Definitions.*

*It is essential that Cheshire County strive to maintain adequate fund balance levels to mitigate current and future risks, such as emergencies, unanticipated expenditures, revenue shortfalls or economic downturns, and to aid in maintaining relatively stable tax rates. Fund balance levels are a crucial consideration in long-term financial planning.*

*The general purpose of this document is to improve the stability and continuity of the Cheshire County's financial operations by setting forth the allowable uses of, and a recommended policy for, the Unassigned Fund Balance.*

***DEFINITIONS***

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**General Fund:** *The fund used by the County to account for basic governmental services supported mainly by tax revenue and intergovernmental revenue, including federal and state grants. It accounts for all financial resources not required to be accounted for in another fund.*

**Operating Budget:** *The sum of total appropriations annually adopted by the Cheshire County Convention.*

**Fund Balance:** *The accumulated equity balance in a fund resulting from operations over the years: the difference between the fund assets and the fund liabilities.*

**Nonspendable Fund Balance** – *includes amounts that are not in a spendable form (such as inventory or prepaid expenses) or are required to be maintained intact (such as principal of an endowment fund).*

**Restricted Fund Balance** – *includes amounts that can only be spent for the specific purposes stipulated by external resource providers (such as grantors) or the enabling legislation (federal or state law). Restrictions may be changed or lifted only with the consent of the resource providers or the enabling legislation.*

**Committed Fund Balance** – *includes amounts that can be used only for the specific purposes determined by a formal action of the County's highest level of decision making authority (annual meeting of the County Delegation). Commitments may be changed or lifted only by the governing body taking the same formal action that imposed the constraint originally. The resolution must either be approved or rescinded, as applicable, prior to the last day of the fiscal year for which the commitment is made. The amount subject to the constraint may be determined in the subsequent period.*

**Assigned Fund Balance** – *includes amounts the County intends to use for a specific purpose. For all governmental funds other than the General Fund, any remaining positive amounts are to be classified as "assigned". The Board of Commissioners expressly delegates this authority to the County Administrator. Items that would fall under this type of fund balance classification would be encumbrances.*

**Unassigned Fund Balance** – *includes amounts that are not obligated or specifically designated and is available for any purpose. The residual classification of any General Fund balance is to be reported here. Any deficit fund balance of another fund is also classified as unassigned.*

**Spending Prioritizations**

- 1. When expenditures are incurred for purposes for which both restricted and unrestricted fund balance is available, restricted fund balance is considered to have been spent first.*
- 2. When expenditures are incurred for purposes for which amounts in any of the unrestricted fund balance classifications can be used, committed amounts should be reduced first, followed by assigned amounts and then unassigned amounts.*

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***RECOMMENDED FUND BALANCE LEVELS***

*While the State of New Hampshire has few restrictions on the use of Unassigned Fund Balances, prudence requires that counties look forward to future financial risks when planning fiscal policy. The Unassigned fund balance changes on an ongoing basis depending upon the particular window during which the fund balance is calculated. As the county budget increases, the requirements for increasing and maintaining fund balance levels must increase as well.*

*Recommended Minimum Balance:*

*Cheshire County should maintain a minimum Unassigned Fund Balance of 12% of the annual total budget expenses.*

*Recommended Target Balance:*

*The County should plan to maintain an Unassigned Fund Balance between 12 and 16% of the annual total expense budget.*

*Plan For Reaching And Maintaining Target Balance:*

*The target level of the Unassigned Fund Balance may be achieved by conservatively estimating revenues and by refraining from using any portion of the Unassigned Target Balance to reduce the tax rate.*

*Excessive Unassigned Fund Balances:*

*As a general rule, any amount over 16% of the Counties annual budget will be evaluated to determine if it should be used in to reduce subsequent budgets.*

***RECOMMENDED UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE USES***

- *Any amount of the Unassigned Fund Balance in excess of the Minimum Balance may be appropriated by Commissioners to offset property taxes as part of the budget approval process with the Delegation to set tax rates for the calendar year. While there are no State regulations regarding this offset, county officials should use extreme caution when considering reducing the funds below the Target Balance of 12%.*
- *The Board of Commissioners may recommend to the Delegation through a budget amendment to appropriate funds from the Unassigned Fund Balance even if such use decreases the fund balance below the Recommended Minimum Balance in the following situations:*
  - *For emergency purposes: When an unusual circumstance arises during the year resulting in an over expenditure of the total amount appropriated for all purposes or when no appropriation has been made.*
  - *To alleviate unanticipated short-term budgetary problems, such as revenue shortfalls. For example: the State of New Hampshire sets the Nursing Home Medicaid*

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*reimbursement rate on January 1 and July 1 of each year. As the County works on a calendar basis, the potential for an unexpected rate decrease may arise. If this rate increase is too much to overcome based on the budget adopted, the County Commissioners may request the Delegation amend the county budget by using funds from Unassigned Fund Balance to overcome the shortfall.*

Master Agenda Item #747: 2020 Audit Engagement Letter. **Trombly presented the letter to the Chair who reviewed and then signed the document.**

Administrator Coates was then recognized to continue the Weekly Operations Report.

He said that the new IT room at Maplewood has been established and the monies to pay for the unplanned change order to create the room and install the needed equipment, is being sourced from other monies from discontinued projects that does not impact the bonding funds. He said that the creation of the new IT room was needed once it was realized that the scope of the initial project did not allow for the modifications needed to include the Assisted Living Facility in the upgrade of the IT systems.

He said that the purpose of the discussion today is to inform the Commissioners that the Commissioners

The allocations are as follows:

Repurpose of Funds:

\$14,860.37 from remaining MNH Wi-Fi Project Funds

\$22,000.00 from remaining PBX Phone Upgrade

\$4,300.07 from old Downtown Architect Funds

\$ 390.56 from old Hil-Rom Lift Funds

**Total \$41,551.00**

**Commissioner Weed moved to use previous delegated funds to fund the installation of the IT room at the Maplewood Nursing Home. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

An in-depth discussion of the System of Care program began and a projected budget for the program expansion and continuation for 2020 was reviewed. The current financial projections show a positive income of over \$100K for year.

Coates then discussed adding funds for the partial renovation of the basement area of the old courthouse wing. He said that the funds have been found and the work will be scheduled.

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Coates said that the Primex Summit will be held on May 18<sup>th</sup> and the reservations for the Commissioners and staff have been completed.

Coates said that a meeting with a company called C3Now concerning Telehealth took place and a demonstration will be scheduled shortly for the Commissioners meeting during an upcoming meeting.

Coates then said that the United Way has asked to present to the Commissioners to explain the situation that a shortfall in fund raising has created. He will contact the Executive Director and will try to schedule them to attend next week's meeting.

Coates said that he is planning to have Service Link also present at a Commissioners meeting in the coming weeks as there have been a number of new programs introduced at the organization that the Commissioners might be interested in knowing more about.

**The Consent Agenda Items which include the Weekly Manifests and the minutes of February 05, 2020 were then taken-up. Commissioner Wozmak to accept the Consent Agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Commissioners Calendars were then reviewed.

Old Business:

New Business: Commissioner Englund spoke to a communication from the Town of Alstead concerning a request from a local support agency for funding and is concerned about "double dipping" from the outside agencies. A similar conversation has been had by the Delegation for the past few years and it was determined that the agencies must seek funding from all sources in order to provide the base required services.

**At 12:08PM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Englund, and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes recorded by:  
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:  
R. Englund, Clerk