

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 8, 2020**  
**County Hall Pursuant to Emergency Order #12 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04**  
**This meeting will be conducted electronically.**

**Conference Call Information**  
**Phone Call-in Number:** +1 646 558 8656  
**Meeting ID:** 409 748 8803  
**Building**

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

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Director of Finance Trombly, Department of Corrections Superintendent Van Wickler, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

**Guests:**

At 8:39AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and a roll-call of the Commissioners attending the meeting was conducted by County Administrator Coates. Commissioners Weed, Wozmak, and Englund all responded as "present".

Administrator Coates then read the state of NH emergency orders in order conduct a meeting electronically.

**Emergency Order #12 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04**  
**Temporary modification of public access to meetings under RSA 91-A**  
**Pursuant to Section 18 of Executive Order 2020-04 it is hereby ordered, effective immediately, that:**

1. Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, paragraph 8 provides: "State and local government bodies are permitted and encouraged to utilize the emergency meeting provisions of RSA 91-A to conduct meetings through electronic means while preserving, to the extent feasible, the public's right to notice of such meetings and ability to observe and listen contemporaneously."
2. Pursuant to Emergency Order #2 issued pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, gatherings of fifty people or more are prohibited.
3. To implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, III(b), that a quorum of a public body be physically present unless immediate action is imperative, is waived for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04.
4. To further implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, III(c), that each part of a meeting of a public body be audible or otherwise discernible to the public "at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting," is waived for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04 so long as the public body:
  - a) Provides public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means;
  - b) Provides public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;
  - c) Provides a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access; and
  - d) Adjourns the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

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**Commissioner Weed then moved to conduct this meeting as an emergency meeting under the relevant provisions of NH RSA 91-A, and consistent with the recommendations contained in Executive Order 2020-04 Order 12 issued by Governor Sununu. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates then outlined the rules of the meeting;

1. Public has an opportunity at the beginning of the Commissioners Meeting under “Public Comment” to speak. Community input will not be allowed after that point, unless recognized and allowed by the Chair of the Commissioners.
2. All votes will be Roll Call and when recognized, we are asking that you re-state your name and yes or no
3. If you have a question or motion that you would like to ask to put forward, please state the following, “Mr. Chair, Commissioner (your name) has a question or motion”.
4. If you are having issue hearing the call, please text or call the County Administrator at 603-313-9002.
5. Please mute your phones so background noise won’t interfere with the meeting.
6. This meeting has been posted on our website so that the community, department heads and media can listen into the meeting.
7. This meeting is utilizing a Zoom Platform so listeners can join us via audio or audio/visual.

Coates explained that because this is new to all of us, please work with us if there are technical difficulties, we will work to correct the issue as soon as possible.

Commissioner Weed then asked if the Nursing Home was experiencing any issues with family members who are concerned about their loved one at the nursing home. Administrator Kindopp said that it has not been an issue thus far as most everyone understands the need to isolate the most vulnerable members of their family many of whom have multiple underlying medical issues.

Commissioner Weed then asked about sufficient Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for the staff was available. Kindopp said that as of now there is just enough masks due to having received a quantity of homemade masks but full PPE protection equipment such as gowns, face shields, gloves, and other gear is in very short supply. She then said that if the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) issues an order to move to the use of only N95 equipment then an immediate shortage would occur with few if any sources to obtain the equipment.

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Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that a dorm at Keene State College is being made available for county employees who may need to self-isolate from family members with existing medical issues because of possible exposure, or staff who may be showing signs of potential infection or actual infection confirmed by testing. He said that he and Bouchard will attend a meeting at 10:30AM today to review the surge hospital to better understand the issues involved and will work with the Sheriff's department on setting-up respite housing in one of the dorms that Keene State has made available to the County for that purpose.

Coates said that work on the Opiate implementation grant is on-going and great progress is being made in completing the grant. He said that due to the pandemic the submission date has been pushed back and the team is putting the extra time to good use and refining the application to meeting all aspects of the grant requirements.

Finance Director Trombly then said that she has been approached by the County's healthcare administrator (HPI) to possibly modify the County health plan due to the COVID-19 impact. She said that after a review with the HPI staff that no action was currently needed but that she will monitor the issue going forward.

Trombly then spoke to having the Commissioners be able to sign the weekly County manifests as required by State law in the building when they are in Keene on business. It was decided that the County Administrator's conference room would be used as it is out of the public use area and will allow social distancing to be practiced.

Trombly then discussed that the County's Tax Anticipated Note (TAN) request for quote (RFQ) that funds the operations of the County between tax receipts, has been released to the banking community for bids. PFM the county financial advisor will monitor and advise on the project.

Coates the said that he has been informed that funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act or the "CARES Act" as part of the COVID-19 pandemic economic response, may include monies similar to the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) that were made available to Counties by the Obama administration during the 2008 recession. He said that he and Bouchard were looking a possible shovel-ready projects in the County that could be launched if the funding is actually provided.

Coates then said that he has had conversations with the congresswoman Kuster's office concerning adding language to the federal funding for county's that are smaller than the current

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cutoff of a population above 500,000 to qualify for COVID-19 expense impact reimbursements. He said that this issue is being actively negotiated and an amendment to the current legislation is under consideration.

Coates said that he recently had a conversation with the NH Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Commissioner Lori Shibinette, concerning the lack of medical supplies that are available for the nursing home. He is hopeful that she can expedite Maplewood receiving at least some equipment in the next week or so.

He then said that withing the county communities a number of sewers have been very busy making over 300 masks that have been donated to Maplewood to help the staff get through the current crisis. It was noted that the staff is very appreciative of receiving the masks but remain concerned that if DHHS enforces only the use of N95 level equipment they will not be able to use the masks they have on hand.

Coates then said that he is working with the Maplewood Activities Director and Cheshire TV to be able to record music and entertainment CD's so that Maplewood and other local nursing homes can have some entertainment while the Stay-at-Home orders are in effect. He said that Cheshire TV will also broadcast the recording so that members of the public can also enjoy the musical entertainment.

Coates then informed the Commissioners that the Sheriff's department has been able to obtain 100 COVID-19 testing kits that will be prioritized to test frontline employees if needed. He said that the turnaround time for the testing is about 5-7 days which will require suspected cases to self-quarantine until the results are received.

He then explained that the staff is working with Cheshire Medical on understanding and implementing testing protocols that are being imposed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) concerning individuals who have been hospitalized return to work or be readmitted to nursing or assisted-living facilities. Coates spoke to the recently implemented shift differentials that were approved for staff at the Department of Corrections and the Sheriff's department that bring them into alignment with other County departments. He said that he received many thank-you's from the Department of Corrections and Sheriff staff members.

Coates then advised that the HR Director is canvassing former Maplewood staff about returning to work for the County if they are available. He also said that the City of Keene is assisting the County by posting County jobs that are available on the City website and that the jobs are being advertised for free.

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He then said that he has been contacted by one of the local Rotary groups that have set aside up to \$50,000 to assist families that need help in paying for childcare during this crisis.

Coates then discussed that the local Rural Development Alliance that was started about two years ago met for the first time in quite a while yesterday and discussed that many of the area businesses are very concerned about the impact on the local economy and the possible failure of many small business as a result of the COVOID-19 crisis. He discussed how government funding may help some businesses and that funding for sober housing funding is also being sought.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

**Commissioner Englund then moved to accept the accept Consent Agenda for the approval of the Weekly Manifest and the Minutes from the April 1, 2020 Commissioners meeting and Commissioner Weed seconded the motion. Upon roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**At 10:17AM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn until noon and was seconded by Commissioner Englund and upon roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes recorded by:  
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:  
R. Englund, Clerk