

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, May 27, 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, HR Director May, Conversation District Manager Littleton, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.
Guests: County Treasurer and Keene City Counselor Terry Clark

At 8:30AM 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 responded as "present".

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.

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:
 - Provides public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by
 - video or other electronic means;
 - Provides public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting;

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- Provides a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are
- problems with access; and
- Adjourns the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting.

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.

At 8:30AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and recognized Conservation District Manager Littleton to discuss Master Agenda Item #767: Conservation District - Semi-Annual Report.

Littleton then provided an update on the District’s programming and she said that they have been focused on the expansion aspect of the last years start-up farmers marketing programs. She said that low income Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares are being expanded and the farmers market for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (food stamps) is seeing large growth due to the pandemic and the economic hit on low to middle income families.

Littleton said that the new net metered solar projects that were recently started are already being expanded for farmers and that the first project in Rindge will be up and running later this year.

She then explained that the program for creation of wildlife habit for landowners who have parcels under 10 acres has seen a tremendous amount of interest and that inquires and participation has expanded dramatically.

Littleton then addressed the Conservation District Equipment rental program which she said continues to grow very strongly and said that the use of the drill equipment is very strong. She also explained that there are now free rentals for new dairy farms and that new grants are being written now for the support of farm commodity programs such as honey, vegetables, etc.

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She pointed out that a very large increase in interest home gardens has occurred because of the pandemic and that the Conservation District has been working with the Keene library to distribute seeds until the library was closed due to COVID-19. She said that she expects that the library program may resume soon and said that the district that some small-scale garden tiller equipment has been made available to homeowners.

The Commissioners thanked Littleton for her report and Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that figuring out the COVID-19 grant funding issues is continuing and is consuming a lot of time as the new grants are announced and the rules for previously announced grants keeps changing as questions and issues arise from the grantees. He said that an extraordinary amount of time and effort has been spent on understanding managing and implementing the grants.

Coates then said that he wanted to make the Commissioners aware of the huge effort and time that the finance department has put into getting the stipend payments out to employees and specifically wanted to recognize Sheryl Trombly for getting payments out to employees quickly and accurately. He said that the work continues apace and that program will end as of June 30, 2020.

He then said that the State Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) committee met last week and, in the meeting, it was discussed that the 10-week delay for the reconstruction project at the Maplewood nursing home may qualify for reimbursement under the GOFERR program. The anticipated cost is over \$200K.

He then said that approximately \$700K has been received from the Federal Health and Human Services (HHS) department that can be used to offset lost revenues to the nursing home due to beds being held vacant for isolation rooms in the event that they are needed for COVID-19 patients. He explained that a much-needed remote Telehealth system is being considered for installation and that it has been very difficult to provide medical services when the Doctors that serve as the Medical Director at that the nursing retire or leave as there is a very severe shortage of Doctors, APRN's and PA's that can be assigned by Cheshire Medical Center for the nursing home.

Coates then said that more positive feedback from some towns on the Zoom COVID-19 meetings that were set-up for the towns last week has been received and that additional meetings will be set-up in June. Monadnock Economic Development Corporation will also be invited to present.

He then said that the meetings with Delegation leadership on every other Thursday continue and that the meetings are going well. A meeting with the full executive committee will most likely be scheduled in July and a full delegation meeting will tentatively take place in August.

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A discussion of some of the other county's pandemic issues was covered and it was discussed that the state is planning on testing all residents and staff at the nursing home.

Coates then discussed a retirement gathering for Rick Van Wickler will happen on Thursday evening beginning at 5:30PM and a film and speakers will present over Zoom. Commissioner Wozmak will act as host. Approximately 100 guests were invited.

Coates said that the County has received notice that the pay stipends available for frontline workers will now be available for food service and medical personal at the jail and the cost will be covered by the state emergency funding.

Coates then said that HR Director May is on the call to discuss the transition at the Department of Corrections and to review the number of applicants for the Superintendent position that now stands at 18. The review committee will convene on Friday June 5th for the first meeting.

Responding to a question from the Commissioners Coates said that the Handyman program is once again underway and that the program is being ramped-up to address a backlog of projects that have resulted in the past few months because of the pandemic.

He then discussed that the Opiate response planning grant work continued and the Rural Response Implementation grant has been submitted with the hope that \$1M in funding will be available over the next three years. Coates outlined the goals for the new grant and the areas that will focused on for services.

He then explained that the work on the pending Department of Justice (DOJ) grant for law enforcement funded at \$58K has been submitted as of yesterday.

Old Business:

New Business: Commissioner Weed spoke about the upcoming NHAC awards that will still be given out even though the Annual Conference has been cancelled.

Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the Consent agenda for the Weekly Manifest and the Minutes from the week of May 20, 2020. Upon roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.

A discussion concerning the cost-shifting letter produced by the Commissioners will be shared with the towns during the upcoming town Zoom calls.

Coates asked Councilor Clark to discuss his proposal to mandate the use of masks in downtown Keene. A short review then occurred.

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At 09:28AM there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn until noon and was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon roll-call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
R. Englund, Clerk