

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, September 30, 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

**Pin #:** 6031233

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

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

**Guests:** Terry Clark, County of Cheshire, Treasurer

**At 8:30 AM, Commissioner Weed opened the meeting, and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Commissioners attending the meeting. Commissioners Weed and Englund responded as "present." Wozmak was not present at roll-call.**

**At 8:33 AM, Commissioner Wozmak joined the meeting.**

**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 Wozmak 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, II 1 (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, II 1 (c), that each part of a meeting of a public body is 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

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- video or other electronic means.
- Provides public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.
- Provides a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are
- problems with access; and
- Adjourns the session if the public is unable to access the meeting.

Coates then outlined the rules of the meeting.

1. The 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 issues 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 to the meeting.
7. This meeting is utilizing a Zoom Platform so listeners can join us via audio or audio/visual.

At 8:33 AM, the Chair recognized Kindopp to discuss Master Agenda Item #806: Maplewood Nursing Home Semi-annual report to receive as informational a synopsis report on the operational and administrative functions of the nursing for the prior six-months.

Kindopp presented the following written report:

**Maplewood Overview to Commissioner's - Covering Jan-June FY 2020**

**Regulatory Requirements:**

Requirements fluctuate quickly relative to the worldwide pandemic; many new mandatory reporting requirements (including a weekly new report) with hefty fines are associated if any are missed.

**QAPI and PIP's:**

QAPI means Quality Assurance/Process Improvement (formerly known as CQI or Continuous Quality Improvement). PIP means Performance Improvement Practice and is intended that all staff at all levels of the organization be part of performance improvement and participate in PIP teams. Due to infection

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prevention measures, reductions in meetings, and other non-essential tasks on resident floors are on hold.

**Corporate Compliance:**

Review of compliance activities; Commissioner Englund participates in quarterly CQI/QAPI meetings – now done via phone as non-essential personnel should not come to MNH. Next review with Commissioners due October 2020.

**Facility Assessment:**

The Facility Assessment is an on-going working binder updated as needed and reviewed/revised annually; the next review is due November 2020. Chairman of the Board of Commissioners cosigned with me this assessment during this time.

**Accomplishments:**

- During this time frame, the most significant accomplishment has to be our move to the new building and flipping of 2 resident floors, Feb 5th, and 6th. We accomplished 118 moves in under 30 hours. Many planning meetings were required to execute this significant action.
- The next most significant accomplishment was procuring sufficient PPE.
- Our facility was once again recognized with an Eli Pick Facility Leadership Award.
- Gave the Keene Rotary Club a presentation and update on our building project.
- Attended family support group meetings to answer families' questions before the move, wrote letters to families about the upcoming moves and gave tours just before the move.
- Began augmented Dementia training with staff as was legislated.
- Attended the TCMC legislative breakfast.
- Held an LNA class and had them complete their exams just before closing to non-essential personnel.
- Working now under new PDPM Medicare rules with SNF earnings more positive than under previous PPS rules.
- Starting in early March, put our Disaster Plan into effect due to the emerging novel Coronavirus (COVID-19); closed to visitors on March 13th, implemented complete screening of essential staff before beginning work each day – non-essential partners not able to come into the building (pharmacist, psychiatrist, dentist, etc.)
- Managed a positive COVID-19 staff case in April, June, and July. No resident cases.
- Began COVID-19 testing for staff and residents in June.
- Daily reports seven days/week to Dr. Sherman, weekly reports to the state through Juvare, and mandatory daily reports (can sum up each week) to the Feds through NHSN and have huge fines at risk if we ever miss any.
- Adjusted and offered resident council individually as no groups or programs permitted

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- Pam Morrison, PA, rejoined our facility – contracted through TCMC alongside our Medical Director, Dr. Keene. Dr. Joe fully retired during this reporting period.
- Due to the inability to allow residents to leave the facility for non-emergent care, we had to quickly start-up telemedicine – our transportation aides worked with IT and computer carts, and videos were stood up quickly to enable residents to have follow-up medical appointments without leaving and risking being in public.
- Had an Infection Control survey due to the pandemic; Deficiency-free status achieved.
- Tried to keep up with the ever-changing rules and update/create policies accordingly.
- Helped Sullivan County Nursing Home starting in March, then again in June due to sudden illness of NHA.
- Staff began receiving a stipend in this time-frame – allowed them to cut down to one job to prevent cross-contamination. Many picked up extra hours, so staffing was generally good during the time frame of this program.
- Began limited outdoor visitation; very staff intense and time-consuming.
  
- **Staff Turnover**
- 44 staff hired for MNH first half of 2020
- 24 staff left from MNH first half of 2019 (14 of which were within their first year)
- Many of the involuntary terminations continue to be due to time and attendance issues, inappropriate behavior, and poor performance.
- Did have voluntary departures due to finding positions in the hospital, unable to return from medical leave, moved away, the job wasn't for them, joined the army, or had too many other jobs.
  
- **Grievances/concerns**
- There were no grievances for the Administrator's level review during this reporting period.
- Two suggestion box papers received and appropriate for responses, completed and posted
- On-going shortage in our nurses and LNA's: traveling nurses and LNA's help us to achieve minimum staffing levels. Increased difficulty in finding entry-level staff for dietary, housekeeping, and laundry. Due to insufficient staff in housekeeping during this reporting period, DH's have had to help with high touch surface disinfecting on the ground and 1st, while LNA's and nurses on the resident units.
  
- **Admissions/discharges**
- Admission/discharges during these 6 months:
- 22 admissions
- 5 Discharges (home or lesser care level facility)
- 24 Deaths

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- On-going difficulties with staffing levels (LNA, nurses, environmental services mainly); CMS expected facilities to set up COVID-19 wings, so we decreased by 5-6 beds to allow a wing that could be stood up quickly; have zip walls and necessary items to deploy.
- **Medicaid**
- Rate during **Q1+2 FY2020**= \$181.27
- Eliminated the contract reviews by the outside entity due to COVID-19 rules of not permitting non-essential personnel into the facility; additionally, did not know where funding for procuring PPE would come from, so freed up these funds to assist.
- **Revenue/Census goals** (revenues are rounded off – see finance statements for actual figures)
- 2020 set a goal of 125 census due to construction/renovation. Due to COVID-19, have reduced census to max 119-120 max, however, due to further staffing challenges, not being able to 'share staff' (per diem staff who work in other health care settings are not permitted to work at two places due to cross-contamination risks) have had to adjust and halt admissions. Census for this time frame = 120 average
- 2020 overall part A goal set at six residents; actual period ending = 5
- part A gross revenue goal set for 395K; actual = just over 440K
- Medicaid revenues set 2.8M for 6-month reporting; actual = 2.6M
- Private pay goal set at 739K for 6-month reporting; actual = 939K
- Atypical pay goal set 847K for 6-month reporting; actual = 757K
- **Construction**
- Due to the worldwide pandemic, construction workers were not permitted to come into occupied spaces. Meetings with builders had to move all on-line. To continue the renovations, many new holes in exterior walls had to be made (or go through what had been a skylight) to access internal spaces. Areas under full renovation include half of one old end of the building, the laundry and kitchen areas, and many major hallways on the 1st floor.
- Bi-weekly updates were sent out to all staff, frequent family updates about construction in the weekly family letters
- **Meetings Review**
- QAPI meetings; mandatory quarterlies completed including Corporate Compliance, additional monthly meetings continue for Infection Control and CQI
- On-going meetings: Initiated weekly DH meetings due to pandemic and frequency with directives/policies/rules changes. Weekly Medicare meetings, Resident care plan meetings have all moved to as large a room as we can offer to ensure the 6-foot spacing
- Medical Staff meetings every 2 – 3 months completed

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- KK's meetings primarily have changed to Zoom platforms; no travel permitted. For these six months:
- Weekly NHAC NHA meetings
- Listened in on some of the NHAC Executive meetings
- Only one OLTCO meeting was held this reporting period
- Monthly zoom calls with the Monadnock Regional Healthcare Workforce Group (MRHWG) about the on-going crisis due to regional worker shortage
- Initially 3x/wk. meetings with DHHS, Public Health, Licensing and Certification

Kindopp then provided the Commissioners an extensive overview of the Nursing Home's daily operations and outlined several on-going issues with CMS and the State. They are often at odds with each other concerning rules and regulations for nursing homes. She spoke of the reconstruction project's status and discussed staffing challenges and the on-going COVID-19 testing program.

The Commissioners asked many questions and strongly commended Kindopp and her team for the great work that they are doing and how hard they are working to keep residents and staff safe.

Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates said that the NH Association of Counties (NHAC) meeting is this Friday. Commissioners Weed and Englund plan to attend the Zoom session.

Coates related that Peter Clark of Senator Shaheen offices joined the County Zoom Information Update for Towns and Cities call on Monday, and he and will provide additional on-going updates for the work that is being done in the House and Senate around additional funding relief for Counties and Towns as part of the next round of COVID-19 funding.

Coates then said that next week Mike Davey of Energy Efficient Investments (EEI) would join the Commissioners meeting and outline the recommendations developed for the County-wide energy audit program. He said that the County's Maplewood Reconstruction Project Owners Representative, Steve Horton, will also join the meeting as will Department of Corrections Superintendent Doug Iosue, and the Director of Maintenance Bogar.

Coates then informed the Commissioners that he had been asked to participate in the Grafton County Administrator selection search. The current Administrator will move to be the full-time Finance Director.

Coates reported that a letter was drafted that will be sent to the Dupont Group that administratively runs the NH Association of Counties organization. He stated that the letter reaffirms who from the County is

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a member of the NHAC executive committee and may have the ability to use a proxy vote upon authorization from the absent member. A short discussion began, and it was decided that the Commissioners would review the document before voting on it at next week's meeting.

Coates then spoke to a recent meeting with Diluzio ambulance and said that they have reached out to The Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) to approve the acquisition of the ventilators and IV pumps that have been discussed at length in previous meetings. The equipment orders have been placed contingent on approval by the GOFERR committee.

Coates then said that the UNH Cooperative Extension staff would be in the building today to review the space that has been identified to allow them to move from the Administration building at 33 West Street to the County Hall building. This move is needed so that the newly expanded System of Care staff can utilize the larger office space currently occupied by the Coop.

Commissioner Weed asked about a possible PowerPoint presentation of a carbon trading education session at a County-sponsored town Zoom meeting scheduled in the next few weeks. Everyone thought the session would be helpful and useful, and it will be scheduled shortly.

Old Business: None

New Business: Commissioner Wozmak discussed the institution of County provided and supported on-line computer services for the towns throughout the County and discussed succession planning for senior staff positions. He also expressed concerns over the possibility of ransomware hitting the towns. The IT Director will be asked to attend next week's meeting to review the issues.

Trombly then said that a review with the Director of Human Resources of the current staffing needs during the COVID-19 pandemic would take place in the next few days and a thorough examination of the program's impact on staff needs and cost to the County. An extended discussion took place around matching the staff's needs and the County positions, especially at the nursing home. Trombly said that the current pandemic leave-of-absence program would end on December 31<sup>st</sup>. She said that the program currently provides up to \$200.00 per day in staff compensation for 2/3 of a staff member's salary when they are out on a leave-of-absence.

**Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the Consent agenda for the Weekly Manifest and the Minutes from the week of September 23, 2020, as amended. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll-call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

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A general discussion of the nursing home census was begun based on a question from Commissioner Englund. The Administrator discussed that we need to continually review our staff's needs and match those to the needs and requirements of the County.

Commissioner Weed then mentioned that he sat in on the Monday Town and City Zoom call and heard that the towns' tax collection for the first half of the year was good but that the second half is entirely unknown at this point. He also asked if it makes sense to do a review of the County energy audit plan to establish priorities. Coates spoke at length about the number of issues that remain to be dealt with on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the County and State.

He then discussed the work that has been done on the Energy Audit and reviewed the scope, timeline, and cost impacts and said that the presentation next week by EEI would provide the opportunity for an in-depth review of the proposed energy options.

Commissioner Weed then asked if there is a need to have a proxy vote for any items that may arise at this week's NHAC meeting. A short conversation began. It was determined that proxy voting as currently instituted allows for voting only for specific issues and is not used as a blanket vote for all Commissioners' issues that cannot attend a scheduled session.

**At 09:43 AM, there being no further public business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes recorded by:

R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:

R. Englund, Clerk