

**MINUTES**

**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**

**Wednesday, December 02, 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, HR Director K. May, Grants Manager Bansley, Dispatch Director Crowell, System of Care Director Calcutt, Superintendent Iosue, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guest(s): County Treasurer, Commissioner Elect, Keene City Counselor Terry Clark, Attorney Adam Kossadaya, Bragdon and Kossadaya. Arthur Roberts, Executive Director, Monadnock Development Corporation.

**At 9:33 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." Commissioner Wozmak was absent with notice, as noted above.**

**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:

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- 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.
- 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 9:35 AM, the Chair recognized Chris Coates and Dennis Calcutt to discuss an issue with onboarding staff into the System of Care program. A New Hampshire Department of Education employee told two staff members that the Education Department would pay their Cobra insurance payment as part of the transition to County employment. It was discussed that the payment is due in less than a week. The person who promised the payment had left State employment without completing the paperwork to provide the employees with a mechanism to have the Cobra insurance paid. A detailed exploration of the circumstances and issues around the situation began. **Following discussion, Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the payments for two months of Cobra payments for both employees to ensure that they retain their insurance coverage. If needed, a third month may be approved.** **Commissioner Englund seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Director Trombly was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #823: The New Hampshire Retirement System, Minimum hours for participation in Group II retirement pool. Trombly explained an employee in the Sheriff's department inquired about the definition of what full-time means for employees for contributions to the State Retirement System. A detailed explanation of how the system is constructed and operates was covered. For purposes of State Retirement, full-time is considered to be 35

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hours of work by the County. At this time, it is not anticipated that any change to County policy will occur.

Master Agenda Item #824: A request for a single-source bid for \$25,000.00 to upgrade the data wiring in the Administration building at 33 West Street and approve the Sheriff's data wiring renovation work bid at \$7,868.00 in the basement office space was then taken-up. A report on the projects to upgrade both buildings was provided, and a lengthy discussion of the need and purpose for the work began. It was explained that part of the request would allow implementing a backup dispatch station in the basement area in the Sheriff's department. The data wiring work at the Administration Building would bring the building up to the rest of the County's network infrastructure standards. It was explained that one other bid was submitted that was slightly more than the Arcomm quote by a company in Manchester and that the firm could not commit to a start date that meets the need of the County to complete the project quickly. It was stated that Arcomm had an extended successful relationship with the County on multiple projects over the past ten years. The projects include the re-construction project at the County's Maplewood Nursing home, the construction of the new Dispatch Center, and the re-wiring of a majority of the 12 Court Street building. **Following discussion and review, Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the bid's award as a single source bid to Arcomm Communications for \$25,000.00 for the Administration building and to approve the expenditure of funds over \$5,000.00 for the Sheriff's department that will use existing grant funds of \$7,868.00 to complete the department's work. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Grants Manager Bansley was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #825: NH Children's Health Foundation Award Acceptance and Grant with Health Strategies of NH on behalf of Greater Monadnock Public Health Network. Bansley described the purpose of the grant and asked the Commissioner to vote to accept the award and sign documents for a New Hampshire Children's Health Foundation award and fiscal sponsor the Monadnock Children's Food Access Alliance's project to assess an asset and gap analysis and develop a plan to address food security. The award amount is \$20,000. There is no required match. The project will be managed by Roe-Ann Tasoulas, Director, Monadnock Farm, and Community Coalition. Funds will be spent on personnel to manage the project, supplies, survey software, meeting space and expenses, and a subcontract for a consultant to complete the asset and gap analysis. **Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the grant and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Bansley then discussed a grant agreement with Health Strategies of NH on behalf of the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network. She outlined the grant's purpose and asked the Commissioners to vote to accept a second award of the same value as the one accepted on 11/4/20.

She requested the Commissioner execute award documents for a \$25,000 grant from Health Strategies of NH for the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network to hire a contractor to lead a rapid Readiness

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Assessment and Early Preparation program for Unite Us roll-out in the Greater Monadnock Region. The source of funds is the federal CARES Act pass-through the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief and Recovery (GOFERR) and pass-through Health Strategies of NH. Funds will be spent on an intern/contractor's time and advertisements for SUD services. Vote to sole-source the contract to Mark Belanger of Integration Sciences because he is presently under contract for two-thirds of the Integrated Delivery Network (IDN) Region 1 and Monadnock region is the missing piece to this work.

**After discussions, Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the grant and sole-source the contract to Mark Belanger of Integration Sciences, seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates then addressed Master Agenda Item #826: Request letter from Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) to retain attorney settlement fees. Coates reviewed the request from MEDC to retain the \$10,000.00 settlement fees from the attorneys who incorrectly structured the original financial agreement for the 33 Winter Street building. Arthur Roberts, the executive director for MEDC, provided a background description of the organization and the reason for the request. Attorney Kossada described the background and history of the 33 Winter Street construction project. Commissioner Wozmak questioned the retention of the funds by MEDC and asked what would change if the monies are granted to MEDC. Further discussion ensued.

**Commissioner Englund moved to allow MEDC to retain the fee of \$10,000 and was seconded by Commissioner Weed after discussions. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed with two Yeas (Commissioners Weed and Englund) and one Nay (Commissioner Wozmak).**

**At 10:52 AM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(l), Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter a non-meeting with the County's attorney to discuss the consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel, either in writing or orally, to one or more members of the public body, even where legal counsel is not present.**

**As a result of deliberations in the non-meeting, no decision was made, and no vote was taken.**

**11:29 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.**

Master Agenda Item #827: 2021 County Holiday Schedule was then taken-up for review and discussion. **Commissioner Englund moved to accept the proposed 2021 Holiday Schedule and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

New Business: A request to modify the current vacation cap policy was taken up, and an in-depth review of the current vacation policies took place. Following a very passionate discussion by all parties, it was

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determined that the existing policy would remain in place without modifications for the immediate future, but further consideration will be given to some alterations in the future.

At 12:32 PM, Superintendent Iosue was then recognized and discussed the Department of Corrections' main dishwasher's failure. \$39,000.00 for replacement was cited as for the replacement cost. Iosue said that the machine is now over ten years old, and a rebuild would be approximately \$5,000.00 - \$7,000.00 with no guarantee that the unit wouldn't fail again in the near future. Following extended discussion, the Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the purchase of a new dishwasher as-soon-as-possible with the expense to be recognized as a capital expense in 2021.

**County Administrator**

Weekly Operations Report - The County Administrator will update the Commissioners on activities that have taken place since the previous meeting.

Coates said the County Attorney's office would be returning to the office after working at home for the past 14 days due to COVID-19 family members of some staff testing positive.

Cheshire County has 185 COVID-19 active cases as of 12/18 vs. 135 in November. He also related that the other counties are again seeing very steep increases in COVID-19 positive rates.

Coates said that the RSA required staff's swearing-in ceremonies would occur on January 6<sup>th</sup> as it conforms to State statute.

Coates then discussed the upcoming Delegation Budget review meeting and Public Hearing scheduled for Monday, December 12<sup>th</sup>. He said that everything is ready for the meeting and that he doesn't anticipate very many Representatives to be in Delegation Hall for the meeting.

Coates then said that a Zoom meeting would be held with Sullivan County personnel tomorrow concerning Sullivan DOC inmates being housed at the Cheshire jail facilities. He will update the Commissioners at next week's meeting on the discussions.

**Consent Agenda: Minutes of 11/18/2020 and Manifests for the week.**  
**Commissioner Englund moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak.**  
**The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.**

Old Business:

**At 10:23 AM pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a), Commissioner Englund moved to enter a non-public session to discuss The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the**

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**disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of deliberations in a non-public session, the Commissioners voted unanimously on a roll call vote to terminate M. W. based on the findings of the Commissioners investigation and the previous meetings on the matter, with the effective date of December 3, 2020.**

**At 12:33 PM, the Commissioner's then voted unanimously to return to the public session.**

**General Discussion:** Commissioner Weed discussed the Carbon Cash Back meeting planned for January 5<sup>th</sup> in conjunction with the City of Keene. Weed asked his fellow Commissioners to support the County being a co-sponsor for the event. Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed to endorse the meeting, and planning for the event will move forward.

**At 1:03 PM, there being no further public business to conduct, the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting.**

Minutes recorded by:  
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:  
R. Englund, Clerk