

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 16, 2021**  
**County Hall**  
**12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431**

**Conference Call Information**  
**Phone Call-in Number:** +1 646 558 8656  
**Meeting ID:** 409 748 8803  
**Pin #:** 6031233

**Present:** Commissioners: Jack Wozmak, Robert Englund, and Terry Clark  
**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Eli Rivera, Sheriff, Will Pearson, ARPA Project Manager, Kathryn Kindopp, Maplewood Administrator, Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.  
**Guest(s):** Steve Horton, County Owners Representative. Mindy Cambiar, Executive Director Hundred Nights Shelter, Jan Peterson, Hundred Nights Boardmember, Sara Bennett, Hundred Night fundraising Consultant. Consolidated Communications Staff; Erik Barr, President of Consumer Business; Mary Ellen Player, V. P. of Market Expansion, and Rob Koester, Sr. V. P. Product Management.

At 8:31 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting, and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Commissioners attending the meeting. Commissioners Englund and Clark responded as "present."

At 8:34 AM, the Chair opened the meeting to discuss Master Agenda Item #892: Hundred Nights Shelter - CDBG Public Hearings to conduct three public hearings to discuss the request to construct a building for the Hundred Nights Shelter in Keene, NH for \$500,000.00.

Commissioner Wozmak spoke, saying:

I open this public hearing to address a proposed Community Development Block Grant application. He then read the public notice as published.

*Public Hearings Notice, County of Cheshire, Community Development Block Grant*

The Cheshire County Commissioners will hold three public hearings on Wednesday, June 16th, 2021, at 8:30 AM. Pursuant to Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire and Executive Order 2020-04, the public hearings will be conducted electronically via the web-based platform Zoom. Members of the public can use the Zoom call-in number at +1 (646) 558-8656 or by joining online at [www.zoom.us/join](http://www.zoom.us/join) and using the Meeting ID: 409 748 8803 and Pin: 6031233 to participate.

The first public hearing is to discuss an application to the NH Community Development Finance Authority for Community Development Block Grant and CDBG Coronavirus (CV) funds. CDBG funds are awarded on a competitive basis in New Hampshire for projects which have primary benefit to low- and moderate-income individuals. A municipality can apply for up to \$500,000 in CDBG funds per year in each of the following project categories: housing, public facilities, economic development, and microenterprise technical assistance. Municipalities can also apply for up to \$500,000 in emergency grant funds and \$25,000 for feasibility studies annually. As a result of state appropriations from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic

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Security (CARES) Act of 2020, additional CDBG-CV funds are being made available for projects that prepare for, respond to or recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Municipalities can apply for up to \$500,000 of these CDBG-CV funds.

The proposal to be considered by the Commissioners is a CDBG application to be submitted by Cheshire County on behalf of Hundred Nights, Inc. in an amount up to \$500,000. The funds, less administrative costs, will be sub-granted to Hundred Nights for the purpose of constructing an emergency shelter and resource center at 122-124 Water Street, Keene, NH 03431. This public hearing has been scheduled to provide specific information regarding the proposal and grant requirements. A second public hearing will be held to adopt the Relocation and Anti-Displacement Plan specific to this project. A third public hearing will be held to hear public comment and re-adopt Cheshire County's Housing and Community Development Plan.

Those interested are invited to attend and comment. Please contact the Cheshire County Commissioner's Office, (603) 352-8215, or via Relay NH at 1-800-735-2964 in advance if you have a disability or need assistance in attending or participating in the hearings. Anyone wishing to submit written comments prior to the hearings should address them to the Cheshire County Commissioners, 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431, or email [rbouchard@co.cheshire.nh.us](mailto:rbouchard@co.cheshire.nh.us).

I recognize James Weatherly to address the grant request.

My name is James Weatherly, and I am the planning technician with Southwest Region Planning Commission; and I am the grant writer and will administer the grant if awarded. I will start by providing a brief overview of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program and, then I will tell you about this particular application.

CDBG funds are available to municipalities and counties on a competitive basis for projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 per program year in each of the categories of public facilities, housing, economic development, microenterprise technical assistance, and emergency grants. Feasibility study funds are also available for up to \$25,000 annually. I have provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that include the area HUD income limits. In addition, for this round, up to \$500,000 CDBG Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) funds are being made available for eligible public facilities and housing projects that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of state appropriations from the CARES Act of 2020.

The proposed application to the Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is for \$500,000 to be subgranted, less administration costs, to Hundred Nights, Inc. The CDBG funds will be used for the construction of an emergency shelter and resource center at 122 – 124 Water

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Street, Keene, NH 03431. The low- and moderate-income benefit of the project is 100% due to the nature of the proposed facility as a homeless shelter. I have provided a handout describing the project.

I recognize Mindy Cambiar, Executive Director of the Hundred Nights Shelter to address the grant request.

Cambiar said that the need for the project is great, as did two other board representatives who strongly supported the project. She outlined the many previous attempts to bring a permanent facility to the city and said that they were almost there thanks to the community's generosity.

Sara Barrett was recognized and spoke about using the funds and how the funding will ultimately help the entire local community.

The Chair then opened the floor to public comments and questions about the proposed CDBG project. The Administrator and Commissioner Englund asked questions, and Commission Clark asked about any Capital Campaign. Additional questions about the size of the building and amenities were discussed, and it was learned that the building would be three floors and approximately 15,000 square feet.

I now open the floor to staff and commissioners for comment.

The Chair then spoke, saying seeing no other public input, I close the public hearing for the proposed Community Development Block Grant application.

May I have a motion on the CDBG grant application?

Commissioner Englund moved to approve the submittal of the application and vote to authorize County Administrator Chris Coates or County Commissioner Chair John Wozmak as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Authorized Designee to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract.

**Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

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**Second Public Hearing: Housing and Community Development Plan**

Commissioner Wozmak then spoke and said, I now open the second public hearing for Discussion of the Housing & Community Development Plan and I recognize James Weatherly to address the Housing & Community Development Plan.

Weatherly then spoke and said that the County Commissioners adopted the Housing and Community Development Plan in January of 2019. However, he said that it must be reviewed and re-adopted every three years to qualify for CDBG funds. At this time, no changes have been made, and the plan is being re-adopted to ensure the County's ability to apply for funds for the next three years.

He stated that the proposed CDBG project conforms to the Cheshire County's Housing and Community Development Plan priority of "*Support[ing] existing public and nonprofit agencies that provide services to lower-income people and families, including nutrition... emergency and transitional housing*".

The Chair then spoke, saying, "I open the floor to public comments and questions about the proposed Housing and Community Development Plan."

No comments were received.

The Chair then stated, "I now open the floor to staff and commissioners for comment."

No comments were received. The Chair then said, "Seeing no other public input, I close the public hearing for the Housing & Community Development Plan." And asked for a motion from the Commissioners by asking, "May I have a motion to adopt the Housing and Community Development Plan?"

**Commissioner Englund then moved to adopt the Housing and Community Development plan and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Third Public Hearing: Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan**

The Chair then said, "I now open the third public hearing for Discussion of the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, and I recognize James Weatherly to address the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan."

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Weatherly said that if any displacement takes place as a result of the proposed CDBG project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any displaced household or business in a project using federal funds must be found comparable housing or commercial space in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds. At this time, displacement is *not* anticipated for the proposed project.

**The Chair then** opened the floor to public comments and questions about the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, and no comments were received.

He then opened the floor to staff and commissioners for comment, and no comments were received.

The Chair then said, "Seeing no other public input, I close the public hearing for the Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan public hearing." He then asked for a motion to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, and Commissioner Englund made the motion to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 9:15 AM, all public hearings concluded.

Master Agenda Item #893: Consolidated Communications - Southwestern NH Fiber Buildout Projects was taken up for discussion.

Coates and Bouchard provided an overview of the County's involvement with the municipal broadband projects that have been ongoing for over two and half years. Bouchard introduced the Cci guests and spoke very positively of Koester's work in bringing together the various parties to implement Fiber-to-the-Home in over fourteen towns with at least three more municipalities in negotiations with the company.

Garr and Player outlined the overall project goals of the company spoke of expanding the fiber network throughout New Hampshire.

Koester said that the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC), was instrumental in educating the towns in the complexity of issues and helped them navigate the creation and

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implementation of the town warrant article process needed to complete the transaction. He spoke of meeting with the County in late 2017 when the process was beginning and of the great help in legislation that State Senator Jay Kahn provided.

**Fiber buildouts continue for Consolidated across the county...**

**Consolidated Communications Bringing New Fiber Internet to Keene, New Hampshire**

*New competitively priced fiber broadband services available to 9,000 residents starting in June; total of 16,000 by the end of 2021*

**Consolidated Gains Eight More Public-Private Broadband Partnerships**

Under the most recent agreement, about 9,400 residents in Marlborough, Charlestown, Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Goshen, Langdon, Troy and Unity will have access to internet speeds of up to 1 Gbps upon completion of the project.

**Jaffrey selects Consolidated Communications for broadband project**

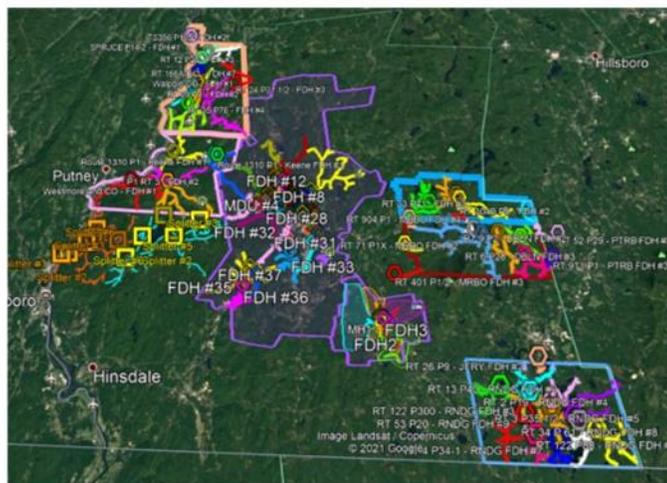
Town would become company's ninth fiber-to-the-rural premises community



*February 25, 2021 by Jeff Feingold*

**...with more communities scheduled for 2021 and beyond**

| Community    | Proposed Timing |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Chesterfield | Complete        |
| Westmoreland |                 |
| Dublin       |                 |
| Harrisville  |                 |
| Keene        |                 |
| Walpole      | Launch 2022     |
| Rindge       |                 |
| Fitzwilliam  |                 |
| Gilsum       |                 |
| Troy         |                 |
| Marlborough  |                 |
| Roxbury      |                 |
| Marlow       |                 |
| Jaffrey      |                 |



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The Commissioners spoke of the crucial need for the projects and said that the fiber projects are equivalent to building an interstate highway to the western portion of the state. It was discussed that having fiber in the region will allow the County to be competitive with other counties and improve home values significantly.

A general discussion of coming improvements to the network was covered, and it was learned that a number of new products would be released over the coming months that take advantage of the fiber network.

The Commissioners thanked the CCI team for their efforts and for attending the meeting.

At 9:29 AM, Sheriff Rivera was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #894: Sheriff Rivera - Proposed Budget Amendments

Rivera spoke to an extra lease payment in the amount of \$35K was found to be in the Sheriff's 2021 budget. He discussed asking the Delegation for permission to reallocate some of the funds totaling approximately \$19-22K for a side-by-side Utility Vehicle (UTV) to be purchased to maintain remote rural radio sites. The second item he discussed was the need for two new Mobile Data Terminals (MDT's) for the two new cruisers that we funded this year. The funding for the MTD's would also come from the same line item as the UTV.

Commissioner Wozmak addressed the UTV and said that he strongly feels that the need would have to be justified to the Executive Committee. A full justification for the purchase and use of the UTV would have to be accomplished, including its storage, maintenance, as well as purchase price.

Rivera then said that there is \$800.00 in drug forfeiture funds that he would like to use to purchase a non-lethal bola wrap gun for testing. He said that the device falls into the same usage as a tool like tasers but is a less stressful device to use in certain situations.

A long conversation began about the requests. The Commissioners spoke to the need for equipment and the cost.

Rivera then said that he would like to establish a Capital improvement fund seeded by over \$40K that was generated from the rental of the Mobile Command post to the national guard during the COVID pandemic. It was discussed that a request to allocate funds and to establish a reserve fund would need to be reviewed and agreed to by the Delegation, and the issue will be referred to the Delegation before the August meeting.

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A discussion of the funding and use of body cameras for Sheriff's deputies began, and the cost of both acquiring and maintaining the devices started. It was learned that the state funding for the equipment was cut from the proposed 100% of the financing to 50% matching funds. Rivera said that the price of the equipment was \$98K over five years.

Master Agenda Item #895: Cost Allocation Plan and Indirect Cost Rate Policy were then taken up for discussion. Bansley asked the Commissioner to vote to approve and execute a Cost Allocation Plan and corresponding Indirect Cost Rate Policy for the County to meet the requirement of the Uniformed Grant Guidance. It was discussed that this is a reauthorization of the current policy and needs to be updated every three years.

**Following a short discussion and review of the documents, Commissioner Englund moved to vote to approve and execute a Cost Allocation Plan and corresponding Indirect Cost Rate Policy for the County to meet the requirement of the Uniformed Grant Guidance. Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Administrator Coates then introduced Master Agenda Item #: 897 COVID-19 Cost Impacts on Maplewood Project.

He reviewed and discussed the financial impact of the pandemic on the Maplewood reconstruction project and discussed a list of recommended actions.

Horton then spoke to the costs and said that the work was accomplished and said that the resident's safety and needs were the highest priority during the work affected by the pandemic. He said that the total cost of the impact on the project was \$189,491.00. He outlined several categories that still need to be addressed and discussed using APRA funds totaling \$1,067,542 to pay outstanding pending costs. It was discussed that the funds are specifically targeted to mitigate expenses caused by the pandemic, which is the cause of the extra costs for the project.

He then spoke to a list of items that total \$678,051.00 to complete the outstanding work to meet the needs of the residents, staff, and the completion of the facility. The total of the remaining work is \$678,051.00.

A lengthy discussion of the use of the ARPA funds and the accounting requirements for the project that are needed was had, and it was discussed that a full accounting of the costs impacts and all associated documentation has already been prepared.

**Following discussion and questions, Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize to amend the budget and present the revised budget to the executive committee for funding. The**

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**motion was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates then said that the Cupola restoration project had been reviewed by two contractors with expertise in this type of work that the cost of the rehabilitation has turned out to dramatically lower than first thought. He said that based on a close and detailed examination that was based on restoration and repair instead of replacement, the total cost has dropped from \$1.2M to approximately \$428K from the bids that were received.

The review of the costs and many questions about the materials to be used and the timeline for completing the work began. Horton, Bouchard, and Coates answered the questions to the Commissioners satisfaction.

The Commissioner stated that they were pleased that the project underwent a second value engineering process, and the cost savings were a pleasant surprise. Coates pointed out that the second value engineering process used to arrive at the lower price was possible because of the overall good condition of some of the main structural elements previously thought to be in a deteriorated state.

**Following a question and answer session, Commissioner Wozmak moved to award the bid for the rehabilitation of the Cupola to Griffin Construction of Alstead, NH, for a cost of \$428,675.00, and Commissioner Englund seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Will Pearson was then recognized to review Master Agenda Item #: 896 American Recovery Plan Act (APRA).

Pearson discussed presentations to the municipalities and others and said that amount of work to communicate the program to those interested is growing by the day. He said that he was seeking to engage an intern to help him in educating the towns, nonprofits, and individuals that have been in contact and need more information.

Pearson said that any cost of the intern could be paid for directly from the ARPA funds as it is explicitly called out as an allowable expense in Treasury guidance. **Following discussion, the Commissioners approved the hiring of a temporary intern for the implementation of the project.**

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Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates said that the first funding of \$7.3M was received from ARPA, and \$5.375M from the Nursing Home's annual Proshare monies was received this week.

Coates said that next Monday, a Zoom meeting would occur with the municipalities and the Delegation concerning the APRA program and will provide a forum for questions and answers for the participants. It is anticipated that this is the first of several sessions over the coming months.

Coates then said that the Southwest Region Planning Commission (SWRPC) held its annual meeting here in the delegation hall on Monday and is the first public meeting in the Hall in about fifteen months. He said that several other organizations are now actively trying to book space for public meetings.

Coates then said that a meeting on July 12th with the Executive Committee would be scheduled to discuss business items for a full delegation meeting to be held on August 9th, at which the budget for 2021 will be reviewed and amended if needed.

Old Business: None

New Business: Clark said that some issues that were raised during last week's Department of Corrections inspection should be formally reviewed and passed on to the Superintendent for consideration. He specifically mentioned the request for further de-escalation training and takedown training. He also brought forth a statement made during the interviews concerning the current inmate canteen vendor that will also be referred to the Superintendent for review.

**Consent Agenda: Minutes of 06/09/2021 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Englund moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.**

General Discussion:

**At 11:27 AM, Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) for the consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against this board or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

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**As a result of deliberations in a non-public session, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.**

**At 11:32 AM, the Commissioner's vote unanimously to return to public session**

**At 11:33 AM, Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) Consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of deliberations in non-public, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.**

**At 11:45 AM, the Commissioner's vote unanimously to return to the public session.**

At 12:02 PM, there being no further public business to conduct, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:  
Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Reviewed and submitted by:  
T. Clark, Clerk