

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, October 20, 2021
County Hall Building
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, Superintendent Iosue, Cheshire County Sheriff Eli Rivera, Chief Deputy, Dispatch Director Crowell, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, Maplewood Facilities Director Harrison, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s): James Weatherly, Southwest Regional Planning, Public Safety Radio Consultant, Bruce Beliveau.

At 8:00 AM, The Commissioners conducted a Registry of Deeds Tour.

At 8:45 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting, and Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responding as "present."

At 8:49 AM, the Commissioners opened the floor for public comment and Department Head updates.

Public Comment: None

Sheriff Rivera was then recognized and discussed that the Dispatch mobile command post was out of service due to a broken extendable antenna mast. The cost is projected at \$4,760.00 to replace the unit, and department contingency funds are being considered to effect the repair. A discussion of the monies received from the State National Guard for using the command post during the standup of a hospitalization site during the COVID pandemic at Keene State was considered for the purchase.

At 9:01 AM, Master Agenda Item #926: Annual Compliance Training for the Board of Commissioners was taken up for review. Kindopp presented the annual Compliance training from the Nursing Home Administrator on Compliance Requirements and Reporting.

Kindopp presented the required materials and training and answered questions from the Commissioners.

At 9:14 AM, Master Agenda Item #925: Semi-Annual Maplewood Nursing Home Report was addressed by Kindopp, and she presented and spoke to the following report to the Commissioners.

Maplewood Overview to Commissioners - Covering Jan-June FY 2021

Regulatory Requirements:

Requirements continued to fluctuate relative to the pandemic.

QAPI and PIP's:

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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.

Corporate Compliance:

Review of compliance activities; Commissioner Englund participates in quarterly CQI/QAPI meetings – now done via phone as non-essential personnel should still not come inside MNH. Next review with Commissioners due October 2021.

Facility Assessment:

The Facility Assessment is an ongoing working binder that is updated as needed and reviewed/revised annually; the next review is due November 2021. The Chairman of the Board of Commissioners reviews and cosigns this assessment with me.

Accomplishments: (ongoing worldwide pandemic since March 2020)

- The second half of reno nearly completed; punch list items ongoing and just beginning warranty items as local transmission rates are lowering, allowing some work in occupied spaces with some fully vaccinated workers (DEW has several, but many subs are not vaccinated. We can isolate workers from residents to decrease any risks).
- A total of 6 positive COVID-19 staff cases were managed; no resident cases. None of these resulted in any outbreaks; able to isolate each case each time.
- Vaccinations; held three in-house clinics with our pharmacy partner; all residents took up the vaccine, and 75% of our MNH staff took up the vaccine. We incentivized staff by setting a goal of achieving 75% vaccination rate with a resultant purchase of an MNH fleece jacket or vest; those who did get vaccinated also got personalization. We did achieve 75.4% of MNH staff uptake.
- Ongoing COVID-19 testing for staff and residents happened per rule; twice per week when the percent positivity was over 10%, once a week when over 5%; monthly for below 5%. Each new case also initiated response testing, which required two weeks of all negative tests to halt testing.
- Completed CPR re-cert during this time period.
- Changed dietary software to Meal Suite 2.0 for meal ticket system
- Was a panelist on a state-wide call regarding Telehealth for the NH Telehealth Alliance group
- MNH team won an ALJ appeal (it was over five years old)
- Opened the staff café in its final location and arranged the tables with the requisite spacing
- Mandatory daily reports to the Feds through NHSN (any rapid test results) with huge fines for missing any within 24 hours continues. NHSN added a new required element: Vaccination data is now required weekly starting this reporting period. This is a rolling number and is based on who has been in the building; it requires collaboration between multiple departments for correct reporting, and any missed data entries risk survey deficiencies and significant financial penalties.
- Working with Department Heads, we focused on weekly staff appreciation moments.

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- Continued to hold limited indoor visitation; toward the end of the reporting period, regular family visitors were prompted toward a self-directed visitation.
- Ongoing weekly family letters; also have to update all residents/proxies by 5 PM the next day with any new positive COVID-19 results in residents or staff, or three or more staff or residents within a 72 hour period with significant respiratory illness.
- Began offering visitors a rapid test just prior to the visit and included questions about vaccination. Taking a test or not, completing the vaccination questions or not was not a condition of visitation. Testing was very staff intensive, so as transmission decreased, we halted offering this option. Most regular visitors report being fully vaccinated.
- Reintroduced a few volunteers fully vaccinated back into the building – they test along with staff
- Moved a supervisory level position in Env Services to evening shift and began offering part-time evening hours to accommodate staff who have such needs
- Completed our first of 2 required disaster drills for the year
- Contracted with Coll's Cleaning for gr/1st after DH's were mostly having to manage this over the past year
- State Survey now has four separate segments; resident care, infection control, emergency preparedness, and life safety. MNH had an annual survey in May. No findings for 3 of the areas; one resident care segment had a finding of expired meds resulting in 1 deficiency.

Staff Turnover

- 25 staff hired for MNH first half of 2021
- 43 staff left from MNH first half of 2021 (18 of which were within their first year)
- Involuntary terminations continue to be primarily due to time and attendance issues.
- Voluntary departures included: seasonal work only, leaving for hospital work, moving out of state (several), unable to return after a medical leave, personal issues outside of work, taking a job elsewhere with higher pay (several), better fit elsewhere for what they studied, and issues with childcare needs that were unmet. There were also a couple of retirements.

Grievances/concerns

- There was 1 grievance for Administrator's level review during this time period.
- There was one suggestion to review and post during this time period.
- One of the two original elevators broke down during the last reporting period, but viral transmission rates had been climbing at an alarming rate, and the repair was delayed until this reporting period when the case counts diminished significantly. The full repair is now complete.
- Staffing shortages: 94% of nursing homes were reporting worker shortages in June (NHSN data). MNH continues to struggle with nurses and LNAs. We use traveling staff to fill vacancies at huge premiums. We initiated a contract with Coll's Cleaning for ground and 1st after nearly one year of department managers having to assist in cleaning this area.

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- Unable to hold an LNA class this reporting period; insufficient potential participants.
- Most LTC facilities in NH are at 60-70% occupancy – while we all must keep a covid wing on the ready, the primary reason remains lack of staffing (clinical and support staff)
- At the end of 2020, 6% of the US population had been infected with covid – Meanwhile, 42% of nursing home residents had become infected. There was a 56% infection rate of dual-eligible in LTC, with 26% of them dying.
- OIG reported a 32% spike in deaths in LTC in 2020 (MNH's death rate in 2020 was lower than in 2019 and 2018)
- Per the Workforce Development Guide 2021; 80% of skilled nursing employees cited burnout as the top personal challenge at work

Admissions/discharges

- Admission/discharges during these 6 months:
- 21 admissions
- 6 Discharges (home or lesser care level facility)
- 16 Deaths (none due to covid)
- CMS continues to require us to set aside beds for COVID-19. We have one wing of a renovated space set up with zip walls and necessary items.

Medicaid

- The rate during Q1+2 FY202= \$184.99

Revenue/Census goals (revenues are rounded off – see finance statements for actual figures)

- 2021 set a goal of 125 census due to renovation and COVID-19. With the realities of staffing, we have not been able to support beyond 107, and in case we need to close a whole floor, we need to get down to 100-104 max. Census for this time frame = 106 average
- 2021 overall part A goal set at six residents; actual period ending = 4.6
- part A gross revenue goal set for 629K; actual = just over 401K
- Medicaid revenues set 2.9M for 6-month reporting; actual = 2.7M
- Private pay goal set at 746K for 6-month reporting; actual = 926K
- Atypical pay goal set 848K for 6-month reporting; actual = 623K

Construction

- Renovation of half of the old building was mostly completed during this reporting period, all while maintaining firewalls and negative pressure. Initiated some warrantee item work due to lowering transmission numbers in this region. The kitchen and laundry are now fully operational, with only minor work still being completed. Hallways were walled off in very thoughtful manners to separate construction workers from MNH workers. Hallways could change on a weekly basis depending on

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the work being completed. This part of the process was some of the most difficult and disorienting to our staff. It was a great relief once the main junctions and staff entrance was turned over to us.

- Final furniture and drapes arrived (some drapes missing, will need one last install date)
- 5/25 was our DHHS inspection for full occupancy; achieved necessary completion to pass.

Meetings Review

- QAPI meetings; mandatory quarterlies completed including Corporate Compliance, additional monthly meetings continue for Infection Control and CQI
- Ongoing meetings: Continued weekly DH meetings due to the pandemic and frequency with which directives/policies/rules change. Weekly Medicare meetings, Resident care plan meetings have all moved to as large a room as we can offer to ensure 6-foot spacing. Twice a month, safety tours with the safety officer and maintenance director due to renovations and survey prep were initiated.
- Medical Staff meetings are generally every 2 – 3 months; however, our Medical Director was on Medical leave for some weeks during this reporting period. Dr. J Walter covered in his absence.
- KK's meetings continued primarily via Zoom platforms.
- Weekly NHAC NHA meetings; participated in some monthly NHAC Executive meetings
- Biweekly NHHCA board meetings; current secretary
- One OLTCO meeting during this time period
- Attended the Chamber of Commerce evening via zoom
- Monthly Monadnock Regional Healthcare Workforce Group about the ongoing worker shortage
- Weekly meetings with DHHS, Public Health, Licensing and Certification
- Weekly ECHO cohorts with the Medical Director, DON, Admin to earn some money was completed this quarter

Commissioner Wozmak asked about the staffing ratio requirements for residents, and a discussion of the facility waiting list was covered. Kindopp discussed the workforce development training program at River Valley college and the number of graduates, including the number of LPN's that were trained for the first time in an extended period. She spoke of the hospitals hiring most of the students and leaving few students for the nursing homes in the area.

Commissioners Wozmak spoke of the 40+ years of having the same problem due primarily to confusing and conflicting State regulations. Background checks through the Department of Safety were discussed as a large bottleneck to hiring staff. A discussion of changing the rules for background checks was discussed, and much frustration was expressed for all the broken promises to fix the system for many, many years.

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At 9:43 AM, Harrison was recognized for Master Agenda Item #927: Semi-Annual Maplewood Facilities.

Harrison presented the following report and discussed each area with the Commissioners.

MNH Facilities report to the Commissioners - Covering Q2 FY21 – Q3 FY21

Accomplishments

- Quarterly Btu reports sent to Kohler Energy for Q2 & Q3
- Semi-annual hood cleaning and inspection completed
- 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-floor elevator lobbies closed off and renovated
- Stanley replaced the piston in the passenger car
- All Temp installed the split system AC in the elevator machine room
- Created, maintained, and followed up on multiple punch lists for the construction project
- Powers Generator on the campus to PM all units
- Testing and balancing of phase 3 renovation completed – escorts required
- ENE serviced the propane boilers
- Final phase – furniture auditing of installation and final counts
- Safety walk through's with Kathryn and Julie Kroupa
- DHHS Survey – facilities passed the Life Safety portion with no deficiencies
- NH DES five year air permit inspection - passed
- Controls and HVAC systems commissioning meetings held
- Laundry Hallway flooring removed and replaced
- State and Local inspections of the last phase of the projects completed
- Smoke curtains were installed on double elevators on all floors
- Met with Rod and hired a timber company to clean up the area next to the facilities building
- Porch finish work complete on all three floors of the addition
- Elevator sump pump pit work, new lighting, and drain line completed
- Moved the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th-floor nurses stations into the renovated section
- Cutover ALF and the Nursing Home main water line to the new systems
- Assisted with setting up 3rd floor Covid wing
- Hotel Services in with ENE on t-stats that are not reading – (5) may be weak Wi-Fi signal
- Moved Social Service's to temp locations so that area could be renovated
- New fire alarm systems were inspected and tested in the elevator machine room
- DEW trailer removed – yay!
- Last of the boiler room piping removed and damaged overhead door panel replaced - Warranty

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- Discovered a building water pressure issue that is in the process of being resolved
- Replaced the white plow truck and plow

Contract signed with Stanley to renovate the two cars and replace piston on the freight car
Concerns

Short Staffing Challenges – 3 out at one point

Impact of the elevator renovations to staff and visitors – lobby disruption etc.

Impact to residents of Assisted Living during the installation of new HVAC equipment

Budget

Account - Q2 2021	2021 Budget	June Actual	YTD Actual	Budget Balance	Percent Remain
P/R Staff MNH	\$354,351	\$24,212	\$167,518	\$186,833	52.73%
P/R Overtime MNH	\$8,500	\$313	\$2,258	\$6,242	73.44%
Outside Services MNH	\$129,589	\$9,005	\$41,215	\$88,374	68.20%
Supplies MNH	\$9,500	\$0	\$2,583	\$6,917	72.81%
Electricity MNH	\$250,000	\$33,592	\$95,036	\$154,964	61.99%
Gas/LPG MNH	\$63,000	\$0	\$12,979	\$50,021	79.40%
Fuel - Biomass MNH	\$104,400	\$11,951	\$54,250	\$50,150	48.04%
Auto Repair MNH	\$6,500	\$10,079	\$12,628	-\$6,128	-94.28%
Building Repair MNH	\$35,000	\$2,053	\$11,648	\$23,352	66.72%
<u>Equipment Repair MNH</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$209</u>	<u>\$4,014</u>	\$20,986	83.94%
Total MNH Facilities	\$1,223,449	\$108,503	\$512,896	\$710,553	58.08%

Account - Q3 2021	2021 Budget	Sept. Actual	YTD Actual	Budget Balance	Percent Remain
P/R Staff MNH	\$354,351	\$23,988	\$241,770	\$112,581	31.77%
P/R Overtime MNH	\$8,500	\$62	\$2,886	\$5,614	66.05%
Outside Services MNH	\$129,589	\$5,063	\$62,450	\$67,139	51.81%
Supplies MNH	\$9,500	\$0	\$2,590	\$6,910	72.74%
Electricity MNH	\$250,000	\$20,003	\$157,478	\$92,522	37.01%

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Gas/LPG MNH	\$63,000	\$4,040	\$22,345	\$40,655	64.53%
Fuel - Biomass MNH	\$104,400	\$4,749	\$65,911	\$38,489	36.87%
Auto Repair MNH	\$6,500	\$1,331	\$15,608	-\$9,108	-140.12%
Building Repair MNH	\$35,000	\$1,519	\$19,578	\$15,422	44.06%
<u>Equipment Repair MNH</u>	<u>\$25,000</u>	<u>\$2,303</u>	<u>\$7,971</u>	<u>\$17,029</u>	<u>68.12%</u>
Total MNH Facilities	\$1,223,449	\$77,897	\$758,749	\$464,700	37.98%

Renewable Energy Credits (REC)

Q1 FY21 789 REC @ \$24.25 = \$19,113.25 – 10% commission \$17,219.92

Q2 FY21 378 REC's X \$24.25 = \$9,166.50 minus 10% \$916.65

Net \$8,249.85 for the quarter

Looking Forward

Prepping for winter season – plows, sanders, trucks

Fall HVAC PM's on all rooftop equipment

The short period-of-time with no contractors in the building – maybe

The Commissioners thanked Harrison for his report, and at 9:59 AM, Master Agenda Item #921: County Dispatch Radio Update Project was taken up for review.

Communication Consultant Beliveau presented a detailed overview of the work needed to upgrade or replace the bulk of the county radio network that has aged out and regularly failing elements.

He outlined the required work and discussed the possible synergies of working with the Keene-based Mutual Aid Network in establishing joint physical equipment facilities that would serve the needs of both organizations more cost-effectively than is currently used.

The Commissioners asked Beliveau many questions about coverage areas, costs, joint cost-saving measures, and operational capabilities. Beliveau emphasized that current public safety communication radio networks more closely resemble geographically large computer networks than the traditional land mobile radio systems that have existed up to this point.

Because of these significant changes, he said that service and maintenance contracts with the equipment vendors must be budgeted for and in place when the new networks are placed into service.

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Discussion with the Sheriff, Crowell, and Beliveau continued; more information will be provided to both the Commissioners and the Delegation as the project continues to be refined and prepared for implementation.

At 10:00 AM James Weatherly - Master Agenda Item #928: CDBG Hundred Nights Water St Building Environmental Review. Weatherly was recognized and reviewed the request for the County to sign the environmental review forms pertaining to the Hundred Night Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) award. The Commissioners asked a few questions and, **Commissioner Clark moved to authorize the County Administrator to sign the required documents. Commissioner Wozmak seconded the motion and, upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Grants Manager Bansley was recognized at 10:06 AM to discuss Master Agenda Item: #929: Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Grant Award Acceptance. She asked the Commissioners to accept the 2022 grant for Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) grant "DV Prosecutor Grant" from the NHDOJ for \$30,000 plus \$10,000 match. She reminded everyone that this had been an ongoing grant for many years that helps to partial pay for an attorney's position in the County Attorney's office that focuses on Domestic Violence cases. **Following a short discussion, Commissioner Clark moved to accept the grant and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

At 11:34 AM, Master Agenda Item #930: Rental of Nursing Housing at 95 Valley Street, Keene, NH The lease of an apartment in Keene for traveling nurses who work at the Nursing Home was taken up for discussion. Coates explained that it has become very difficult for the travel nurses to find living quarters in the area when they work at the nursing home or the department of corrections. He and Bouchard looked at a three-bedroom apartment in Keene that had just become available and were able to work with the landlord to secure the space for County use. Coates said that although the County would be leasee, the space would be sublet to the nurses as they receive stipends from their companies for housing that will cover the cost incurred by the County. He spoke to acquiring a one-year lease on the property at 95 Valley Street so that the nursing home can maintain critical staffing levels.

Commissioner Englund then moved to authorize the Administrator to sign the lease for the property. Commissioner Clark seconded it. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report

Coates then discussed that the final payment for the Jaffrey courthouse had been received, and the closeout would occur shortly. Coates cited the paragraph of the original financial document outlining the procedure for the termination of County ownership and the transfer to the State.

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The termination article follows:

ARTICLE SEVEN - STATE'S OPTION TO PURCHASE.

Since the semi-annual rental made by the State to the County during the term of this Agreement shall, when completed, satisfy the payment in full of the bond issued by the County to assist in the financing of the construction of the Premises, then the County shall convey by Quitclaim Deed, and the State agrees to accept the Premises in consideration of the payment of \$1.00. Alternatively, the State shall have the right at any time to pre-pay the outstanding principal and interest on the bond, without penalty, as long as such pre-payments are sufficient to pay the bond in full. Upon the payment in full of the bond and, provided the State shall not be in default of any other term or condition of this Agreement, then the County shall issue to the State a Quitclaim Deed, free of any encumbrances and liens except easements, rights of way, public ways restrictions or other matters shown on the Site Plan, described in this Agreement or of record.

Following discussions, Commissioner Wozmak moved to transfer the ownership of the Jaffrey district courthouse through a Quitclaim deed, for 1\$ based on the completion of the term of the bond and on Article Seven of the financing document that calls for the State of NH to assume ownership of the building at the termination of the loan, and as voted on and established by the Cheshire County convention in the resulting bond documents dated in 2001.

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

Coates then said that the old Generator at the nursing home would be moved soon to the town of Westmoreland's Fire Department once the applicable insurance information had been received.

Old Business: None

New Business: Commissioner Englund shared a message from Cheshire Medical Center on the impact of the current COVID surge on the hospital. There are no beds available, and the infection rate has reached 9.6%. This rate of infection is very close to the peak of the initial outbreak and is very concerning.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 10/13/2021 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: None

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At 12:13 PM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter a nonpublic 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 Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of deliberations in a nonpublic session, no decision was made, and no vote was taken.

At 12:56 PM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

At 12:57 PM, there being no further public business to conduct, Commissioner Clark moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
J. Minahan, Transcriptionist

Reviewed and edited by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
Terry Clark, Clerk