

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 4, 2015 09:30AM**  
**Commissioners Conference Room**  
**12 Court Street**  
**Keene, NH 03431**

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**PRESENT:** Commissioners Stillman Rogers, Chuck Weed, and Peter Graves.

**STAFF:** Finance Director Trombly, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, Register of Deeds Tilton, Grants Manager Bansley, DOC Superintendent Van Wickler, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

**GUESTS:** Westmoreland Selectman J. Hammond, Linda Mangones, Keene Housing, Kate Easterly Martey, Director of Economic Development, NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA), Shelley Hadfield, Hadfield Associates, and Jack Dugan, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC).

Chairman Rogers opened the meeting at 09:30AM and recognized Register Tilton to discuss Master Agenda Item #187: Quarterly Report to the Commissioners. Tilton provided the following report:

Registry of Deeds quarterly report for the year ending December 2014.

In the spring of 2014 a new recording station was installed which provides a better work space, new wiring and improved work flow. In addition, dedicated electrical circuits were installed to replace a multitude of extension cords. New paint and carpet provided the finishing touches in updating the office.

The Cheshire County Deeds website is used by the public to negotiate to the records search site as well as to access other property related information. Both the County and the NH Deeds websites provide detailed instructions and information which has proven helpful to the general public researching the records.

Changes in the office have been made to take further advantage of our software and reduce escrow type accounts that have to track money as it comes in and is paid out. Late in 2014 the decision was made to eliminate so called 'draw-down' accounts which required staff to keep a running balance for each person who had such an account. Effective February 1, 2015 the use of draw down accounts was discontinued and those users were encouraged to use the on-line printing option available to them.

Some very large title companies prefer to use our alternate service called Tapestry, a web-based product which allows large scale users (and the occasional search from home customer) access and printing options without having to set up an in-house account. A pay-as-you-go system with credit card payment options, Tapestry gives those large national companies greater flexibility to search over multiple states with a single login instead of having individual accounts with each county registry. Our vendor, Fidlar, covers the credit card fees, collections, bad debt, provides 1-800 phone and email support to users as well as manages the billing and collecting of Tapestry access fees from the end users. At the end of each month Fidlar direct deposits the county's share of the Tapestry revenues into our bank account.

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Old books continue to be scanned to allow the images to be available in the on-line search and then the books are printed as new smaller volumes taking up less space, allowing us to more than double our available shelving space. We are presently scanning old books for the year 1915.

All staff members have been cross-trained to be able to index, and the old Grantors/Grantees books are being indexed to allow searching by name. The index searchable-by-name records are now available to May 1972. Our records date back to 1771. Inputting this data and making these names searchable is an extremely time consuming and detailed process. When completed we hope to have all county records indexed and searchable by name.

In 2014 we recorded 8008 documents, which was over 2000 fewer recorded documents than were filed in 2013. There were 1000 fewer mortgages recorded and 800 fewer discharges. Since the recording fee is \$12 for the first page and \$4 for each subsequent recorded page, fewer recordings mean fewer pages – in the case of mortgages which average 16 - 20 pages there were significantly fewer pages recorded resulting in less revenue to county.

Revenue collected for transfer tax and sent to the State of NH was:

2013: Transfer Tax: \$3,382,080.00                      2014: Transfer Tax: \$4,246,523.52

\*\*Transfer tax is levied based on the value of the property sold. In 2014 there were at least two transfers of property with high transfer tax revenue: Monadnock Marketplace sold for over \$31 million and the Kohl's plaza for over \$13 million.

In 2013 the County portion of revenues from the transfer tax 4% commission was \$140,920.  
In 2014 the County portion of revenues from the transfer tax 4% commission was \$176,938.

Revenue collected for L-Chip and sent to the State of NH was:

2013: L-Chip: \$204,912                                      2014: L-Chip: \$156,480

\*\* L-Chip is required when filing a Deed, Mortgage, Discharge or Plan. With fewer of each of those documents filed, the L-Chip revenues were reduced. (And as noted above, the recording fees were also reduced.)

Revenue turned over to Cheshire County in 2013 was: \$551,317.00.  
Revenue turned over to Cheshire County in 2014 was: \$493,472.05.

The Commissioners asked a number of questions of Register Tilton concerning her thoughts on

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the outlook for revenue and she discussed the anticipated acquisition of an aperture scanner to be able to digital scan the many old microfilm aperture cards to computer disks.

The Commissioners thanked Tilton for her report and then took up discussion of Master Agenda Item #188: CDGB Grant Signatures - KEAP Project - L. Mangones

Mangones discussed the history of the project and documentation and presented the finalized document for signatures. Commissioners Graves as Clerk, signed document for the purpose of authorizing the Chair to execute the grant documentation based on a vote in December 2014 by the previous Board of Commissioners to move forward with the grant. Commissioner Rogers then signed the documentation and ACA Bouchard provided the needed notarization.

Master Agenda Item #182 from the previous week was then taken-up for discussion. Jack Dugan from MEDC discussed the reason that he, Kate Easterly Martey, and Shelley Hadfield were present was to discuss the County's participation in the State Micro-enterprise grant program.

Easterly-Martey and Hadfield then reviewed the Micro-enterprise program and said that overall the State has \$750,000 for grant funding programs in 2105 and that up to \$500,000 could be allocated to a particular region. She then said that thus far about \$800,000 in requests for funding have been received. She then said that Grafton County had been administering the grants in the past through the services of Shelly Hadfield but that a second County is required to help distribute and administer funding projects in the southern tier of the state. A discussion of the funding that has been received by the Hanna Grimes center in for the past four (4) years began and types of business funded was reviewed. The program is aimed at micro-businesses described businesses with five (5) or fewer employees. Easterly-Martey said that in the northern tier of the state the business participating in the program are primarily bakeries, crafts, and manufacturing companies. She said that in the southern part of the state the businesses were mostly in the accounting, food, farm, day care, and small construction categories.

Commissioner Weed asked about the Pathways to Work program in Keene that seeks to place long term unemployed people in positions, including former inmates that had served their sentences. It was discussed that the Micro-enterprise program is focused on meeting the growth and sustainability needs of small businesses and not necessarily long term unemployed individuals.

Hadfield then discussed the operation of the program and the need for the additional participation of an administrator in program.

Following an extended discussion the Commissioners agreed to move the request forward and to present a request to the full delegation at the March 16<sup>th</sup> delegation meeting to move forward with County participation. Hadfield will provide the public notice language and other

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documentation needed for the meeting to ACA Bouchard.

The Commissioners thanked Dugan, Hadfield, and Easterly-Martey for attending and look forward to being part of the program.

Master Agenda Item #189: Status of National Association of Counties (NACO) Dues was then reviewed. Director Trombly discussed a conversion with a representative from the New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC) about the County's dues and said that the annual invoice for membership could not be located. ACA Bouchard then spoke to the issue saying that he had just received a phone call from NACO the previous afternoon and found out the invoice has been returned to NACO for an improper address. Bouchard said that the NACO representative had forwarded the invoice via email and that he would pass it on to Finance.

A discussion of the value of the NACO membership to the County started and the prescription discount program that the County sponsors was discussed. Bouchard said that for a number of reasons that were discussed with the NACO representative including competing discount programs, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the expansion of the federal Medicaid program, the number of county residents using the program has been dropping over the past few years. Bouchard will follow-up and get updated information from NACO on participation rates and usage data and explore the viability of the program and will present his findings at next week's meeting.

Master Agenda Item #190: Letter to C. Van Ostern - Managed Care and Financial Issues Relating to County Nursing Homes was then reviewed by Administrator Kindopp.

Kindopp reviewed the contents of the letter and the Commissioners suggested some changes in format and suggested adding Executive Councilor David Wheeler as recipient of the letter as he also represents towns within the County.

Kindopp then reviewed the recently completed annual operational survey of Maplewood and said that overall she was very pleased with the results and that only a few relatively smaller issues were identified in the report. She also said that the items noted have already been addressed and remediated.

Kindopp then reviewed the on-going difficulties with the two (2) managed care transportation companies that the nursing uses and discussed the denials that seem to be becoming routine with one of the companies. She outlined the amount of hours that are wasted in dealing with these denials and said that often the denials seem arbitrary and capricious.

Also discussed was Senate Bill #8, Relative to appropriations for nursing homes that is coming up for review on April 10<sup>th</sup> and the large negative impact that the bill will have on all nursing

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homes in the state.

At the conclusion of the discussion with Administrator Kindopp, Grants Manager Bansley was recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #191: Prosecutor Domestic Violence Grant - Final Document Sign-off. Bansley briefly reviewed the program and presented the documents for signature to the Chairman.

**The Commissioners reviewed the document and Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the Chairman to sign the grant and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Bansley then discussed Master Agenda Item #193: Grant contract amendment for New Hampshire Strategic Prevention Framework Partnership for Success "Higher Ed" grant to amend the budget line items within the price limitation.

She said that she is seeking authorization to readjust a line item in grant to move funds from one line item to another to meet program requirements. A discussion of the grant status began and the impact that the program was having at the participating schools (Keene State and Franklin Pierce) was covered.

**Commissioner Graves then moved to accept the amended budget to authorize the Chairman to sign the amendment. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.** The Chairman then signed the documentation.

ACA Bouchard the discussed Master Agenda Item #192: Parking Space Allocation and Rentals. Bouchard said that now that the courthouse project is nearing completion and the three county program staffs that were previous in rental spaces have been moved into the 33 West Street and 12 Court Street buildings, it has created a significant shortage of available parking. Bouchard reviewed the efforts that have been made to find and / or create additional parking without satisfactory results. He said that discussion with the City of Keene have only produced an option of leasing five (5) additional parking spaces at a cost of \$115 per quarter (\$460 annually) in the Gilbo lot adjacent to the County Latchis parking lot which is fully utilized. He said that he is also investigating the possibility of moving the dumpster located at the rear of the Sheriff's entrance to the front lot that abuts Court Street with the intent of being able to create one (1) or perhaps (2) additional spaces in the rear of the building. Even if both of these options are put into place a shortage of at least six (6) to eight (8) spaces will still exist.

Bouchard then asked for authorization from the Commissioners to proceed with negotiations and with the City on acquisition of additional parking and was granted authorization to do so with the cost for any rental of spaces to be paid from the Facilities department Outside Services line item.

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**At 10:57AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Weed moved to go into non-public session to discuss a matter, which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the body or agency itself, without that person having requested an open meeting. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion. Upon vote the motion to enter non-public session was approved unanimously.**

**As a result of the deliberations in nonpublic session no decisions were made and no vote taken.**

**At 11:37AM The Commissioners unanimously voted to return to public session.**

Director Trombly then discussed HB2: relative to state fees, funds, revenues, and expenditures and the very negative funding impact on state nursing homes that the passage of the bill will impose.

She also discussed the receipt of \$21,450 from the pharmaceutical company McKesson as part of a financial settlement in a lawsuit that charged that the company had charged excessive fees for prescription drugs relating to the County Health plan coverages. The Commissioners discussed the options for the funds and will decide on a recommendation for allocating the monies in the next few days.

Trombly then discussed the Tax Anticipated Note (TAN) borrowing that will occur in mid-April and the letter that was received from the New Hampshire Retirement Fund concerning a routine audit that needs to be completed.

She also noted that a letter from the local ASFME union representative concerning the opening of contract negotiations for 2015 has been received. Lastly she reviewed the request from Moody's Rating service for an update call that has been scheduled for March 18<sup>th</sup> and invited the Commissioners to sit-in on the call if they wished to participate.

The Commissioners recognized ACA Bouchard for the purpose of providing the Weekly Operations report. Bouchard said that in response to the letter sent by the Commissioners asking the towns potentially affected by Kinder Morgan if they would like to have the County coordinate communications, only Richmond had responded to the letter. Commissioner Rogers said that he would contact the other towns and try to get an update.

Bouchard then said that he was notified by the leasee of the farm that they will release the use of the house known as the "Day Care" house at the end of March. In response to questions Bouchard said that the overall condition of the house needs to be assessed and a decision as to the continued use and purpose for the house needs to be completed. A tour of the building will be scheduled in April following return of the premises to the County.

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Bouchard then said that the acquisition of a copier authorized for the second floor of the Courthouse will be installed on Thursday of this week.

Bouchard then said that the construction of the Lactation room and the employee workout room have begun and should be complete in a few weeks.

The weekly Census was then reviewed.

**Commissioner Graves then moved to accept the Weekly Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion unanimously.**

**The minutes of February 25, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Commissioners then reviewed the Commissioners Calendar.

At 12:52 AM there being no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Graves moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
P. Graves, Clerk