

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 27, 2015 09:30am**  
**Department of Corrections**  
**825 Marlboro Road**  
**Keene, NH 03431**

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**PRESENT:** Commissioners Stillman Rogers, and Peter Graves.(Commissioner Weed absent with notice).

**STAFF:** Grants Manager Bansley, Administrator Kindopp, MNH Facilities Manager Harrison, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

**GUESTS:** Westmoreland Selectman J. Hammond

Chairman Rogers opened the meeting at 9:35AM and recognized ACA Bouchard for the purpose of providing the Weekly Operations report.

Bouchard reported the following:

The Employee Health Fair will be held at 12 Court Street tomorrow. All employees are invited to attend. The fair will run from 10:00am to 2:00pm.

A request has been received from The Heritage Commission, Keene Parks and Recreation, and the Keene Music Festival for the County to participate in a "Sunday Social" event on June 28<sup>th</sup> that would be held at 12 Court Street. The purpose of the event is to raise funds to renovate the Sumner Knight Chapel and to promote and feature Keene's old historic buildings. Suggested donation of \$15.00 can be given at the door or tickets can be purchased ahead of the event.

The Commissioners discussed the event and agreed to participate in the June 28<sup>th</sup> open house. ACA Bouchard will respond to the request and determine next steps.

Bouchard said that he has reached out to a local attorney to discuss the creation of individual tax cards for each of the parcels at the farm in Westmoreland and will report back when more details are available. December 2015 is deadline for being able to convert existing parcel to separate tax cards.

Bouchard then reported that the new facilities staff member in Keene is doing very well and he is a welcome addition to the facilities team.

Bouchard then discussed the quotes received from two vendors to replace the defective generator transfer switch at the Old Courthouse. He said that both quotes were very similar and were within a few dollars of each other. Bouchard asked for authorization to move forward with the acquisition and installation of the transfer switch from Powers Generator at a projected cost of \$6,147.00 with the monies to be taken from the Old Courthouse building renovation funds.

Following discussion and questions, **Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the purchase of the components to repair the existing generator automatic transfer switch from Power Generator for a sum not to exceed \$6,147.00 with the monies to be taken from the Old**

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**Courthouse renovation funds. Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Bouchard then discussed the renovation project for the Old Courthouse front portico and said that based on the preliminary comments and numbers from some of the bidders there may not be enough funds to renovate both the stairs and entry columns and also replace the cooper roof and gutters. Final bids are due on June 8<sup>th</sup> after which an update will be provided to the Commissioners.

Bouchard then discussed the pricing he has received from MacMillin on the makeover of the Court Street / Center Street parking lot and said that based on the preliminary numbers the addition of the extra parking should be lower than the planned conversion of the space to a “mall” entrance. **Following a number of questions Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the construction of the additional parking spaces providing the cost to do so does not exceed the originally planned costs for installation of the mall entrance. Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea’s.**

Master Agenda Item #236: The Quarterly report from the Department of Corrections was tabled until a future meeting because the Superintendent is out of town on business.

Master Agenda Item #237: NH Strategic Prevention Framework Partnership for Success II Cohort II grant agreement amendment to extend the contract term and increase grant funds.

Grants Manager Bansley was recognized and presented documents for signature for the extension of the grant for the NH Strategic Prevention Framework Partnership for Success II Cohort II grant agreement amendment to extend the contract term to June 30, 2016 and to increase the grant amount by \$100,000. The additional time and funding will be used for the substance misuse prevention coordinator to conclude the substance misuse prevention assessment and capacity building work on Keene State College and Franklin Pierce University campuses.

**Following a series of questions Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the extension of the grant and was seconded by Commissioner Rogers. Upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea’s.**

Sarah Southerland the project director will attend the June 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting to provide an overview of the program to date and outline the goals for the final year of the project.

Administrator Kindopp and Facilities Manager Harrison were then recognized to discuss the on-going issues with the failing cast iron drain pipes at the nursing home.

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An extended discussion began concerning the drain pipes throughout the nursing home structure and the overall condition of the pipes that failed and been replaced thus far. Also discussed was the issue of the main drains for the building that are buried in the concrete foundation slab of the building and the belief that they may be exposed to the earth on bottom of the pipes such as was found to be the case in kitchen floor drain that was excavated and replaced last year in the central kitchen facility.

A number of ideas to try to identify failing pipes was discussed and an email received from a local citizen who is a Professional Engineer with a Non-Destructive Examination background in metals addressing possible causes for the pipe failures was covered.

Harrison said that the facilities department has stocked sufficient PVC piping to repair any near term cast iron failures in the walls or between floors but worries that the main drains for the entire building that are also cast iron are embedded in the foundation slab and cannot be easily accessed or repaired.

Kindopp then discussed the change of the Medicare quality rating system and offered the following document to the Commissioners for review and discussion:

**May 2015 Five-Star Quality Rating:**

Since 2008, each nursing home in the USA has been rated by the government on a 5 star rating system. This rating system has 3 main components; 3 years of state survey results, staffing levels obtained during the last full survey, and quality measures/ratings as are pulled from the individual resident data transmitted to the government. The initial roll out was so unpopular that 31 State Attorney Generals wrote letters to CMS to request they suspend and revise this system. According to the letter the rating system "...can be misleading and create significant confusion for seniors."

In February of 2015, the Five-Star rating system was rebased by CMS. Overnight, due to CMS administrative decisions, what once met criteria rating as a 5 star, now only rates as 3 or 4 stars. CMS predicted that about 2/3's of nursing homes would see a decline in their quality ratings, and about 1/3 would lose either one or two stars.

Limitations regarding this rating system include that the Quality Measures reflect the type of resident the facility has. For example, a facility that accepts and is adept at treating residents with skin sores may unfairly be judged by the general public for having a high percentage of residents with pressure sores. Quality indicators will suffer on account of this, and then in addition, star(s) could be lost. Likewise, a facility that accepts and is adept at working with residents with significant behavioral issues may unfairly be judged by the general public for having high percentages of residents with behaviors affecting others and/or receiving anti-psychotic

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medications. The industry may predictably respond by avoiding admitting residents with profiles that will negatively skew their quality indicators that now additionally affect their star ratings. The result may be that when the general public uses this complex system to compare homes, they could easily arrive at a negative and inaccurate conclusion about the overall quality of any facility.

It is possible to have nursing homes with a good community reputation do poorly on this rating system. The reverse scenario is also possible.

CMS did write the following in their fact sheet relating to this rebasing that reads: “However, the changes in the quality measures star ratings released in February (2015) do not necessarily indicate a change in the quality of care provided.”

Much pride can be taken when a facility reaches 4 or 5 stars, however, facilities with 1 or 2 stars should not despair. Facilities understand the controversy and limitations of this rating system. The challenge is in how the general public attempts to interpret the ratings without guidance relating to how the system weights the components.

As of December of 2013 and through early 2015, Maplewood achieved an overall rating of 5 stars. There are 35 long term care facilities within 50 miles of Maplewood (included Mass and Vt.) and 6 of the 35 were rated at 5 stars in mid-2014. Maplewood is one of the homes that lost a star overnight; we are now 4 stars.

Editorially, Americans are trained to consider “5 stars” as an indicator of high quality. Could the “Ritz Carleton” survive on a “Motel 6 budget” and keep it’s stars? What if hotels lost stars for issues out of their control such as medical conditions of their clients? Some things are a reflection of good care, or the reverse, but metrics are not always that black and white as it relates to quality. It’s a shame that while the nursing home industry has been making major strides in improving care, that our efforts are punished by pushing the goal posts back a few yards – invisibly to the general public.

Kindopp then discussed the staffing shortage issues at Maplewood and outlined some of the steps being taken to alleviate the shortages of personnel in the LNA population. She said that internal LNA training classes at Maplewood would be instituted this year and existing staff members in non-nursing departments are being given the opportunity to cross train as LNA’s. She also reviewed the recruiting efforts being made by HR and discussed acceptance of high school students (those under 18 years of age) as limited duty LNA’s.

The Commissioners thanked Kindopp and Harrison for their reports and then began review of the Weekly Census report.

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

**The minutes of May 20, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Graves moved to accept the minutes as amended. Commissioner Rogers seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed with no changes made.

At 11:32AM there being no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Graves moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Rogers and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk