

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday January 27, 2016 09:30AM
Maplewood Nursing Home
201 River Road
Westmoreland, NH 03467

PRESENT: Commissioners Stillman Rogers, Charles Weed, and Peter Graves,

STAFF: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Superintendent Van Wickler, Register Tilton, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

GUESTS: Westmoreland Selectman Hammond

Chairman Rogers opened the meeting at 09:38AM and recognized Administrator Coates.

Coates reminded the Commissioners that the next Executive Committee budget review meeting is on Monday and that the Maplewood Sub-committee will next meet on February 5th at 12 Court Street. He said that EGA, the firm engaged to develop architectural options and operations scenarios will be presenting their report in two pieces. The first meeting on February 5th will cover the building options and costs and the second meeting to be scheduled in March to cover the operating aspects of the options.

Coates said that a conference call is scheduled for next Tuesday with the New Hampshire Retirement System to discuss the Group I and Group II retirement classes as it relates to employees at the department of corrections facility.

He then said that a meeting with Keene Housing and SWRP concerning Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) was held and a streamlined and simplified approach to scheduling, presenting, and processing CDB grants was discussed and agreed to. More work is needed to complete the steps needed for the next CDBG presentation coming up next week but should be completed on time for the meeting.

Coates then discussed the termination of the Keene Energy Agriculture Project (KEAP) and said that in looking into the matter he found that no grant funds had been expended as discussed at last week's meeting and that the \$500,000 grant cannot be reused for any other project.

He said that a letter from the chair of the County Conservation District has been received concerning the districts interest in being part of the next farm RFP process. A time will set-up to discuss their involvement, if appropriate, in the near future.

Coates then related that a follow-up meeting with Southwest Mutual Aid (SWMA), Sheriff Rivera, and himself that was had and that the details for the use of the radio frequencies discussed in previous Commissioners meetings are complete. Coates presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that outlines the agreement between the County and SWMA which was discussed and was then signed by the Chair.

Coates then discussed a conference on "Living Wage Work" for the Monadnock region that he has been invited to attend in early March. He said that the conference is being sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson foundation and that all expenses for his attendance were being paid for by the foundation.

Coates asked for the Commissioners permission to attend the meeting and Commissioner Weed moved to authorize Coates to attend and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

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Coates discussed a Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) grant that brought to his attention by Commissioner Weed. He said that in investigating the terms and conditions of the grant it appears that it is directed at larger metropolitan areas than Keene as one of the key requirements is that at least 75,000 individuals need to receive direct services. As the total population of Cheshire County is approximately 77,000 he said it was very unlikely that the County could qualify.

The Chair then recognized Administrator Kindopp who discussed the upcoming EGA presentations at the Maplewood Sub-committee meetings and reviewed the plan by EGA to split the presentation into two (2) sections that Coates had mentioned earlier.

Superintendent Van Wickler was then recognized and informed the Commissioners that he was scheduled to testify in Concord on SB463 which proposes to abolish the death penalty in New Hampshire. Commissioner Graves asked if he was testifying as an individual or as a County employee. Van Wickler said that his testimony was strictly his own opinions on the matter and that he was not there to represent a position of the County.

Master Agenda Item #343: Audit Engagement Letter was then taken-up. Director Trombly presented an authorization letter and discussed the audit firm that is be engaged to complete the yearly audit of the County as required by state law. She explained that an internal control risk questionnaire will sent to all County Commissioners as a way to make them aware of the ways to monitor and inspect financial controls within their County's. She said that the cost of the audit for 2016 is \$29,250.00 as compared to \$27,889.00 in 2015 and \$27,342.00 in 2014. Also discussed was the new accounting rules that require posting of unfunded retirement liabilities to the County's financials. **Following discussion Commissioner Graves moved to authorize the engagement of the audit firm and he was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Register of Deeds Tilton was then recognized and discussed Master Agenda Item #342: HB1513 - Register of Probate Pending House Bill.

Tilton said that the intention of this pending bill is to remove the Probate courts from the State District Court system and to make Probate a County government function. She explained the background for the bill and said that under the current set-up many of the States Probate records are not being cared for properly and are deteriorating and being lost.

The Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning the registry and probate offices and Tilton said that she believes that the bill as written will most likely not pass but the Commissioner's need to be aware that changes such as these unfunded mandates need to be tracked closely.

Commissioner Graves then asked about a discussion brought up by one of the Representatives at last week's budget review at Maplewood concerning vehicle leasing and the move by some County and State agency's to begin leasing vehicles and to turn them in after two (2) of use. An extended discussion began about the cost of this approach and the possible benefits and downsides of turning County

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vehicles over every two (2) years. More investigation needs to be done to ascertain the details of this program to see if it is worth pursuing by the County for its vehicles.

At 10:42AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Graves moved to go into non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion or compensation of a public employee or the disciplining of such employee, without that employee having requested an open meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of deliberations in non-public session it was decided to keep R. P. at his current level of compensation for an internal transfer to a similar position in a different department than the one to which he is currently assigned.

At 10:58AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.

The Weekly Census was reviewed and it was agreed to add the 2015 average run rate column to the spreadsheet so the Commissioners can see the Year-Over-Year differences in census averages.

Commissioners Graves then discussed his attendance at one of the Wage and Classification employee presentations and a general discussion of the progress of the project and the engagement of the County personnel in the project was had.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea's.

The minutes of January 20, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes as amended. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed with two Yea's.

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed.

At 11:37AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Grave moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed with unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk