

MINUTES  
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting  
Wednesday January 18, 2017 09:30AM  
County Hall Building  
Commissioners Conference Room  
12 Court Street  
Keene, NH 03431

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Charles Weed, Peter Graves, and Joseph Cartwright

**STAFF:** Finance Director Trombly, Maplewood Nursing Home Administrator Kindopp, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard.

**Guests:**

At 9:30AM the meeting opened and Chairman Graves recognized Bouchard who discussed Master Agenda Item #456: NHDOS Office of Highway Safety E-Ticket Equipment Grant.

Bouchard discussed that the purpose of the grant is to bring automation to the issuing of tickets across the state and that the Sheriff's department had applied for, and was awarded, a grant for \$1,800.00 to provide the equipment for use by the Sheriff's deputies.

**Following discussion, Commissioner Weed moved to accept the grant from the Department of Safety for \$1,800.00 to increase deputies' efficiency and accuracy when filling out citations and accident reports by purchasing equipment to file electronic citations, and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #457: New Hampshire Municipal Association (NHMA) 2017 Membership was then taken-up for discussion for the purpose of reviewing County membership in the NHMA for 2017. The cost of the County's participation in NHMA was discussed and the approximately \$600.00 per year for a half membership was vetted. **Following a lengthy discussion, Commissioner Cartwright moved to not renew the yearly dues for 2017. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion. Upon vote Commissioners Cartwright and Graves voted Yea and Commissioner Weed voted Nay. Motion carries two (2) to one (1).**

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that a meeting with the Swanzey town administrator concerning a possible link between the County and the town regarding the County providing referrals and other support for the Carpenter Home Assisted Living unit was discussed. Coates said that the County Assisted Living Facility already recommends that people applying for residence consider other facilities when the County's Assisted Living Facility is full, and the Carpenter Home in Swanzey is one of the locations recommended to someone who needs to find an immediate placement. He went on to say that he was able to provide a number of suggestions that are in use at the County facilities to help the town reduce the deficit of the Carpenter Home. He said that he offered to provide further ideas and support to help them in maintaining the facility but that he was also frank in his discussions that County personnel were unable to offer any on-site services or assistance based on the needs of its own facilities, programs, and resident needs.

Sheriff Rivera was then recognized and said that he was unable to attend last week's meeting but that he wished to welcome Commissioner Cartwright to the Board of Commissioners and said that he would be pleased to answer any questions for the new Commissioner. An extended

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conversation around the delivery of “papers” (warrants, subpoena’s, notices, etc.), began and the Sheriff explained how the department charges for deliveries of documents and discussed that the cost to provide the service is less than the charges for the services provided.

A discussion of other services that are provided by the Sheriff’s department was had and some of the services provided such as police patrols, was described by the Sheriff.

The Commissioners said that they found the conversations around the operations of the department to be educational and informative and thanked the Sheriff for attending the meeting.

Coates then discussed the receipt of final paperwork for receiving \$19,298.02 from a recently deceased resident who left the Maplewood Nursing home the gift as a remembrance in their will. He said that the funds will be received shortly and that a discussion for their use should be taken-up in the coming weeks.

Finance Director Trombly discussed the background of how funds are administrated from wills and trusts and reviewed some of the existing wills and trusts that are currently under administration.

Coates then reviewed a discussion that he recently had with the City of Keene Head Librarian who wishes to use the meeting rooms at the County Hall building for library functions during the upcoming re-construction of the library facility. Coates said that he contacted the library and discussed how the process might work and what is needed by the County to accommodate their request. He said that one item that would be required is an insurance rider from the library that includes the County as a named insured. He also discussed the temporary storage of some books that need to be moved and some possible space in the County Hall building where they could be placed for a few months during the library construction.

Coates then said that he has sent an email regarding adding Commissioner Cartwright to executive committee for the NHAC and expects to receive conformation shortly.

Coates discussed a meeting with Conservation District Manager Amanda Littleton to discuss the Maplewood Community Gardens that Antioch runs for the public, educator and demonstration purposes. He said that Antioch as requested to install a high hoop green house on the site that would be paid for with a grant. The Commissioners discussed that this it would be agreeable but more details would need to be forthcoming as to size, location, etc.

Coates discussed the recently held Political Unity luncheon at the Community Kitchen where local Democrat’s, Republican’s, and a few independent votes, were in attendance to develop and strengthen local ties and to discuss common ground issues.

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Coates then discussed the Managed Care Organization's (MCO's) meeting that is being planned for elected officials in Cheshire County to include the newly elected Governor, local Executive Counselors, Senators, and Rep's, as well as the NHAC executive board, that is tentatively being planned for the beginning of March. It was discussed that a Senate bill has been put-in to delay the implementation of Phase 2 of Managed Care for two (2) years. It was also discussed that despite the pending bill the meeting is still needed for educational purposes and to be fully prepared when the MCO process is finally implemented. The new federal administration potential impact was covered and any new proposals for Medicaid administration will need to be closely examined.

Coates said as a reminder that the latest Drug Court graduation will be held on February 1<sup>st</sup> at the court house at 33 Winter Street.

Coates then discussed a letter that was sent out to the office of Senator Shaheen and forwarded to a family member concerning a relative that has been turned down for admission to the nursing home due to the facility not having the ability to meet the potential resident's needs. He said that a meeting with Cheshire Medical Center, County personnel, and the family member was being set-up to further examine the issue.

A discussion of the breakdown of the mental health system in the state started and the expectations of a much greater need for more a comprehensive set of services in the coming years was covered.

A broadband meeting with the City of Keene, River Valley Community College, Antioch University, the Keene Chamber of Commerce, and County personnel, was then reviewed by Coates. He said that the discussion of the cost of broadband services and of the impact of not having affordable high-speed broadband services available everywhere in the county was discussed and the cost and methods to implement a plan was reviewed. It is unclear as of yet what the best path forward is to help achieve the goal of providing all County residents broadband access. It was suggested that one approach is to provide the service as a utility function in the same way that electrical services are provided.

Coates discussed a letter that was received from Ron White, the Executive Director of the New Hampshire Association of County's (NHAC) that outlined his recent meeting with the New Hampshire Municipalities Association. (NHMA). Nothing of note that would affect the County was discussed.

Coates said that the ads seeking a new County Human Resources Director have been re-posted and the new Employee Handbook has been distributed. A discussion of how the HR job posting process works within the County Departments and how ads and resume reviews are conducted was had based on questions from Commissioner Cartwright.

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Bouchard then handed out a five year (2012-2016) trend analysis of the federal inmate population at the Department of Corrections and reviewed the year-over-year growth and the population fluctuations that trend downward in the January through March timeframes and the subsequent increases over the remainder of the year. The analysis shows that the pattern has on average, held true for the five (5) years examined.

Commissioner Graves as a follow up to the question by Commissioner Cartwright concerning the process to hire employees began a discussion to review the current policy that requires the Commissioners to approve all new hires being hired in above the base wage of the grade. Commissioner Graves had previously questioned the need to keep this policy in place as in the last two years as Commissioner he feels waiting for the final approval of the Commissioners on the wage has only delayed the hiring process. He supports the process that is in place whereas a review would continue to be done by the Finance Director and County Administrator to determine the appropriate wage to be offered in order to maintain internal equity for existing employees.

Discussion ensued to support the process that would continue to provide oversight in that a thorough review would continue to be done by the Finance Director and County Administrator to analyze the proper wage to be offered in order to ensure and maintain internal wage equity. That review would satisfy the ability to allow the Department Heads to offer this wage without the need to wait for the next Commissioners meeting to receive approval. Commissioner Graves reflected that in his last two years the Commissioners have always approved the rates knowing that the internal wage was being analyzed and by changing this policy it would result in eliminating the delay as well as reduce the number of non-public sessions that have been needed in the past to support the prior policy. The further advantage of this approach is to be able to offer a good candidate a position as quickly as possible as the job market in the local area is very tight especially for medical positions and good candidates can find multiple positions in a short time.

**Commissioner Cartwright made a motion to authorize the hiring of new employees above the base wage of the grade only upon the completion of the wage rate analysis conducted by the Finance Director and County Administrator. Once a new hire has been brought on under these circumstances the Commissioners will be presented with the standard paperwork informing them of the new hire that was hired in above the base of the grade. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The weekly census was reviewed.

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

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**The minutes of January 11, 2017 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes as amended and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright. Upon vote the motion passed with unanimously.**

The Commissioners calendar was reviewed and no changes we made.

**At 11:56AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was then seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

C. Weed Clerk