



County of Cheshire

12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431
www.co.cheshire.nh.us

MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Wednesday, August 30, 2023

This meeting will be conducted in person
and electronically (via Zoom) at the

Maplewood Nursing Home
201 River Road, Westmoreland 03467

Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803
Pin #: 6031233

Start Time 08:30 AM

Present: Commissioners Robert Englund and Terry Clark (Commissioner Wozmak absent with notice.)

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Superintendent Iosue, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, Connected Families Director Calcutt, HR Director May, Grants Manager Bansley, Communication & Executive Services Coordinator Bernstein, and County Project Director Bouchard

Guest(s): Southwest Regional Planning Commission, Senior Project Manager, Terry Johnson.

Public Comments

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made, at most three (3) minutes in length.

At 08:37 AM, the Commissioners opened the meeting, and Commissioner Englund and Clark responded as present.

I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

To receive, as informational, departmental updates requiring Commissioner review, participation, approval, and impactful departmental and operational issues.

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item: #1113: Quote for Sealing and Stripping Parking Lots - C. Coates
Action Expected: Review and approve the Keene parking lot maintenance quote.

Coates presented a quote from Minkler Paving and said that five other companies were contacted for quotes but were still waiting to respond due to the existing workload.

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Coates explained that if Minkler is to complete the work this year, the best opportunity is this Labor Day weekend, with the work starting on Friday.

The Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning other possible bidders and asked for details of the work to be done and which lots would be affected. Coates said all the parking lots, including the Latchis lot, 33 West Street, the 33 Winter Street Parking garage, and the Center Street lot, would all be done together.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to accept the bid as a sole source bid in order to complete the work in a timely manner, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item: #1114: Office Graduation Ceremony - October 4th - DOC - D. Iosue
Action Expected: To review and discuss the Correctional Officer Graduation ceremony tentatively scheduled for October 4, 2023.

Iosue requested that the Commissioners convene at the Department of Corrections following their weekly meeting schedule in Keene on October 4 for a Correctional Office graduation ceremony. A discussion began concerning switching venues for the October 4th meeting to the Department of Corrections and to hold the October 11 meeting in Keene the following week. Following discussions, the Commissioners authorized the change of the Commissioner's meeting at the Department of Corrections from October 11 to October 4. The meeting at County Hall scheduled on October 4 will be moved to October 11 instead of the Department of Corrections.

Master Agenda Item: #1115: Froling Energy - Disposition of Old Pellet Boilers - C. Coates and R. Bouchard

Action Expected: To review and approve a plan presented by Froling to dispose of the obsolete pellet boilers removed from 33 Winter Street.

Coates and Bouchard explained that Froling Energy provides services to the County's HVAC systems and has offered a \$2,800.00 maintenance contract for no cost to the County in trade for two obsolete pellet boilers previously used at 33 Winter Street. Bouchard explained that a number of interested parties had looked at the units in the past eighteen months, but the units were deemed to be either too large or too small for their applications.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the acceptance of the maintenance contract offer in trade for the old obsolete pellet boilers. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. County Administrator

Weekly Operations Report - The County Administrator will update the Commissioners on activities that have taken place since the previous meeting.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

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VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests for August 23, 2023, and the meeting minutes of March 22, 2023.

Commissioner Englund moved to accept the manifests and minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Calendar

Action Expected: To accept the calendar as informational and to make necessary changes/additions.

VIII. General Discussion for Commissioners

Master Agenda Item #673: Commissioners - State Cost Shifting Letter and Restorative Justice Program

IX. Nonpublic Sessions:

A nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board unless such person requests an open meeting.

At 08:59 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter non-public to discuss RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board unless such person requests an open meeting.

As a result of discussions in nonpublic sessions, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.

At 09:21 AM, the Commissioners moved to re-enter the public session.

Master Agenda Item: #1116: Positional change in the Connected Families NH department - D. Calcutt and C. Coates

Action Expected: To hear and discuss a request from the Director of Connected Families to implement a position change in the department.

At 9:22 AM, Calcutt presented a request to develop a half-time Clinician position in the Connected Families department. The position would be funded from an existing unfilled authorized slot within the department, resulting in no new funding request.

Calcutt provided the following overview document in support of his request.

Proposal: Develop an internal clinician role for Connected Families NH

Identified Gap in Service:

- Due to the increase in referrals and hiring difficulties, youth and families remain on our FAST Forward Interim Support List (ISL) for currently around 2 to 4 months.
- While on the list, youth and families receive Family Peer Support (NAMI NH) and Safety Crisis planning (CFNH) when waiting for coordinator availability.

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- High-need cases will qualify for intensive in-home support, which can have their own waitlists.
- Due to these timeframes, a fair amount of youth and families could benefit from some short-term stabilization due to the complexity of their situations. They often seek immediate support but endure long waitlists to engage in counseling through CMHCs or private providers.

Proposed Solution:

- Use a currently unfilled yet budgeted CFNH position to allow this work to start in September
- Provide short-term therapy to the youth and families to "calm the waters" to prepare them for FAST Forward once a coordinator has been assigned. Through this therapy, ideally, the families will have begun implementing skills to lessen anxieties, communicate more effectively, identify areas for growth, and gain an understanding of the overall Wraparound process.
- Allow collaboration with coordinators and providers to work more efficiently once assigned.

Therapeutic approaches:

- Brief Strategic Family Therapy
- Solution-focused brief therapy
- Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT)
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT)

Revenue Generated:

- This position would be funded by the daily reimbursement rate we receive when utilizing intensive in-home supports
- The current rate is \$63.78 a day per case. If services are provided 365 days a year, we would generate \$69,839.10 in revenue.
- At the current rate, we would work with approximately three families.

Potential savings:

- Intensive in-home supports are delivered and paid in 4 levels of care
- Three of the four levels exceed our reimbursement rate; therefore, when we offer the therapeutic service, we lower our costs

1 \$50

2 \$75, savings of \$11.22 per day or \$4095.30 annually, three families would be \$12,285.90

3 \$100 savings of \$36.22 per day or \$13,220.30 annually, three families would be \$36,660.90

4 \$145, savings of \$81.22 per day or \$29,645.30 annually, three families would be \$88,935.90

Proposed Timeframe:

- Start Monday, September 11, to begin building out the necessary components.

Supports Needed within this proposal:

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- Candidate for licensure supervision - 1 hour of weekly consultation with a licensed and approved provider.
- Approximate cost is \$150/hr. (\$7,800 annually)
- Potentially send the supervisor to Days 1 & 2 of Wraparound and TR-ECC training?
- Other training will be helpful/warranted; however, no major costs would be associated with it

Calcutt then addressed several questions from the Commissioners and spoke to the advantage of adding this resource, resulting in a revenue stream coming into the County to pay for the services provided.

Following discussion, Commissioner Clark moved to allow the Director of Connected Families to use an unfilled existing position within the department to enable the position to begin in the next few weeks. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 09:39 AM, Commissioner Clark moved to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) Matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board unless such person requests an open meeting.

As a result of discussions in nonpublic sessions, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.

At 09:58 AM, the Commissioners moved to re-enter the public session.

At 09:59 AM, Commissioner Clark moved to enter a nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against this board or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled.

As a result of discussions in nonpublic sessions, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.

At 10:04 AM, the Commissioners moved to re-enter the public session.

Coates was recognized for the Weekly Operations report and said that a Real Estate agent in the local area had identified a 26-acre property for \$360K in Swanzey and Keene that could be split into two or more parcels. A meeting will take place on Friday **to receive information and discussion.**

Coates said that the meeting with Taylor Caswell from the NH Business Development agency **went very well and went very well.**

Following the first meeting, follow-on meetings were held with other state agencies, and Senator Hassen's **staff was retained to** develop programs to upgrade Public Safety Communications.

Master Agenda Item: #1117: Semi-Annual Report Maplewood Nursing Home - K. Kindopp
Action Expected: To receive as informational a report from the Maplewood Nursing Home Administrator on the facility's operations for the first half of the year.

At 10:16 AM, Administrator Kindopp was recognized and presented the following report to the Commissioners.

Maplewood Overview to Commissioner's Covering Jan-June FY 2023

Regulatory Requirements:

Still analyzing and implementing the new rules that went into place this October. Always difficult to predict how survey will interpret them until some facilities go through survey under the new process and start sharing this information. Few rule changes (mostly roll-backs) only at this point in the Pandemic.

QAPI and PIP's:

QAPI means Quality Assurance/Process Improvement (formerly known as CQI or Continuous Quality Improvement). PIP = Performance Improvement Practice. It's intended that all staff at all levels of the organization be part of performance improvement and participate in PIP teams. Anyone is welcome to be on a PIP team. We have focus groups working on our quality measures reports that are based on the minimum data set, and we are preparing operations for the new dysphagia system called IDDSI, and we worked on issues resulting from the increase in residents receiving packages through the mail (ie. impacts medication rules...labelling and accounting of items/clothing)

Corporate Compliance:

Review of compliance activities; Commissioner Englund participates in quarterly CC/CQI/QAPI meetings. The Commissioners will be due for annual training for CC in the fall of 2023.

Facility Assessment:

The Facility Assessment is an ongoing working binder that is updated as needed and reviewed/revised annually; it was reviewed by the team in November 2022.

Accomplishments: (ongoing worldwide pandemic since March 2020; end of PHE May 2023)

- COVID; We had 1 large resident outbreak and a couple of smaller ones impacting 28 residents in Q1 and 5 residents in Q2; no hospitalizations nor deaths related to COVID during this 6 month period.
- Mandatory weekly reports to the Feds through NHSN. No missed reports or fines. (CMS will require these through Dec 2024)
- Family letters requirement eliminated with the end of the PHE; social services has taken over routine correspondence at this time and plans to morph back to a periodic newsletter format
- Completed the first of 2 required disaster drills for the year (stranded due to flooding)
- Hosting monthly Commissioner meetings at MNH
- Met a few times with KSC regarding students at MNH

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- CTS did their annual site visit for our w/c vans audit; no issues
- Progressing towards switching to IDDSI swallow/meal management dysphagia system
- Hosted the Delegation at MNH for the executive budget hearing
- Worked on the state-wide team transitioning NH's CMI from PPS to PDPM
- Met with the Federal Delegation regarding preparing for the end of the PHE
- Med Director (Dr. Keene) retired in February, and we transitioned to Dr. Walter in this position
- Social Services team restarted their family support group
- Reviewed our 'defend in place' status for ALF and MNH with Westmoreland fire chief (s/p reno)
- Annual bed entrapment audit completed
- Team completed a trial to choose a new bed frame (Joerns will replace the Caroll CS7 frames)
- DD and CPR recertification completed
- ALF life safety survey completed – they focused on our kitchen we received minor tags that were immediately corrected
- Cheshire EMS now has 2 rooms at MNH and an ambulance in our new garage for Westmoreland Response
- Replaced mattress covers per the audit at the end of 2022.
- Monthly audits (MDS coding, care plans and billing practices) done by external company
- Held our volunteer appreciation meal indoors for the first time in our new building and since the pandemic
- DON to Chicago to receive her McKnight's Women of Distinction award (Veteran VIP)
- Held our National Nursing Home week special meal in our large conf rooms for first time
- Finally able to lift wearing masks at all times including with residents for most of the time
- Loan forgiveness program completed for the year
- We held one LNA class this reporting period and graduated 4 new LNA's.
- Held our Grand Reopening and showed our completed 3rd floor (no residents) to interested parties

Staff Turnover

- 34 staff hired for MNH second half of 2023
- 37 staff left from MNH second half of 2023
- Involuntary terminations are primarily due to time and attendance, work behavior or inability to perform required job.
- Voluntary departures included: job too physical or not for them, moving to another state, another job, transportation issues, inability to return after a medical issue. There have been a few retirements. Much of our turnover is per diem staff who have a primary job elsewhere.

Grievances/concerns

- There was one union informal grievance discussed with the admin during this time period.
- There were 4 suggestions to review and post during this time period.
- It has been over a year since the state determined we needed to become licensed as an ambulance service for our w/c van for NEMS. We have complied with all requested documents and remain in limbo waiting upon our vehicle inspection and ultimate licensing/certification. There are no impacts on our operations or billing to date.

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- CMS threatened to institute a minimal staffing mandate; has not yet been released, many campaigns and letter writing to advise CMS against this

Admissions/discharges

Admission/discharges during these 6 months:

- 19 admissions
- 4 Discharges (home or lesser care level facility)
- 16 deaths
- We continue to keep our 3rd floor closed. Cheshire EMS occupies 2 rooms on the renovation side.

Medicaid

- Rate during **Q1+2 FY2022**= \$235.72
-

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

- 2023 set a goal of 120 census. With ongoing realities of staffing, we struggle to support 100 beds being filled. Census for this time frame = 98 average
- 2023 overall part A goal set at 6 residents; actual period ending = 4
- part A gross revenue goal set for 511K for 6 month reporting; actual = 356K
- Medicaid revenues set 3.1M for 6 month reporting; actual = 2.8M
- Private pay goal set at 970K for 6 month reporting; actual = 1M
- Atypical pay goal set 814K for 6 month reporting; actual = 747K

Meetings Review

- CQI/QAPI meetings; mandatory quarterly CQI/QAPI completed including Corporate Compliance, additional monthly meetings continue for Infection Control
- Ongoing meetings: Monthly DH meetings, KK attends monthly Falls Comm meetings, Safety Comm meetings as well as CQI meetings. Other ongoing meetings that KK may or may not attend; Weekly Medicare and Resident care plan meetings, Weight Comm meetings.
- Medical Staff meetings happen every 2 – 3 months
- Appointed by Governor to the Opioid Abatement Commission (meets monthly)
- Attended Delegation meetings as well as participated in the new delegation orientation
- Attended an indoor NHHCA conference in June
- Participated in the NHAC P3 subcommittee
- Representing the NHAC on the MFP (money follows the person) state-wide DHHS initiative
- On behalf of NHHCA met with DHHS Commissioner re: ongoing issues with Medicaid Pending
- Attended HB1 hearings to support an increase in Medicaid rates
- County team met and discussed Medicare Advantage issues impacting admissions
- Met with Richard Towne re: CCC and MNH partnerships discussions
- Attended the Keene Chamber evening (they changed their name now)
- Social Services team attended the state-wide 'transitions of care' meeting
- KK's meetings continued primarily via Zoom platforms; more shifting to in-person:
 - Bi-monthly NHAC NHA meetings (still Zoom)
 - Monthly in-person NHHCA board and executive staff meetings; currently serving as treasurer

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- Monthly Monadnock Regional Healthcare Workforce Group about ongoing worker shortage

An extended discussion of the federal rules for nursing homes began, and the large and growing number of issues that negatively affect all nursing homes was covered. It was stated that it is almost impossible to keep up with all the rules and regulations and provide the needed floor care to the residents.

Staffing issues and organizational needs were then covered in detail, and some options to bolster staffing were discussed.

Further discussions around local partnerships and building a continuum of care for the County were covered, and the collaboration of the various County medical services organizations was discussed in-depth.

Kindopp said that she has learned that the average age of RNs nationwide is 52 yrs. And that one year is now considered a good employment term. Other generational wants and needs were discussed, and how to meet these needs and requests to try to build a pool of qualified applicants in order to be able to meet organizational and resident needs was covered.

Coates then said that he met with the wheelchair firm that the County partners with and that everything is going well and the company is growing rapidly. A new vehicle that will allow the transport of patients with certain medical skin conditions instead of using an ambulance for service is under consideration.

Coates recapped the unfair and destructive Medicare and Medicaid pricing that ambulance companies are forced to accept to transport patients. He said that the lack of fair and equitable compensation contributes to many companies going out of business, and it is reaching a critical point in NH in particular, and if it continues, it will cause a catastrophic break in the health care system.

X. Adjournment

At 11:47 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. Bouchard
Director, County Projects and
Energy Management

Reviewed and approved by:
T. Clark, Clerk
Board of Commissioners