



County of Cheshire

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

MINUTES
COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Wednesday, November 1, 2023

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

County Hall Building
Commissioner's Conference Room
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803
Pin #: 6031233

Start Time 08:30 AM

Present: Commissioners Robert Englund, Jack Wozmak, and Terry Clark

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Grants Manager Bansley, Finance Director Trombly,
Director of Executive Services & Communications Bernstein, Sheriff Rivera and County
Project Director Bouchard

Guest(s): Associate Planner for Southwest Regional Planning Commission Jack Ahern and
Special Advisor for Planning and Development for Keene Housing Linda Mangones

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 08:30 AM, the Commissioners opened the meeting, and Commissioners Wozmak,
Englund, and Clark responded as present.

Master Agenda Item: #1131: Community Development Block Grant Hearing – J. Ahern & S.
Bansley

**Action Expected: To hold a hearing on CDBG funding and receive updates on CDBG
projects.**

**Commissioner Englund opened the first public hearing for discussion and public
comment on the Community Development Block Grant project at 8:32AM.**

Jack Ahern, Associate Planner with SWRPC explained that it is a requirement of the
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to hold public hearing while the project is
underway to allow the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions about the
project.

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♦ **County Commissioners** 352-8215/Fax 355-3026 ♦ **Registry of Deeds** 352-0403/Fax 352-7678 ♦ **Finance Department** 355-0154/Fax 355-3000 – 12
Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 ♦ **County Sheriff** 352-4238/Fax 355-3020 ♦ **County Attorney** 352-0056/Fax 355-3012 – 12 Court Street, Keene, NH
03431 ♦ **Behavioral Health Court** 355-0160/Fax 355-0159 – 33 West St. Keene N.H. ♦ **Department of Corrections** 825 Marlboro Street, Keene, 03431 -
903-1600/Fax 352-4044 ♦ **Maplewood Nursing Home & Assisted Living** 399-4912/Fax 399-7005 - TTY Access 1-800-735-2964 ♦ **Facilities** 399-
7300/Fax 399-7357 ♦ **Human Resources** 399-7317/399-7378/Fax 399-4429 - 201 River Rd, Westmoreland, NH 03467

Jack Ahern described the project being discussed today as a \$500,000 Emergency Grant sub-granted to Monadnock Affordable Housing Corporation (MAHC) to rehabilitate a building located at 105 Castle Street, Keene, NH. A Gap Fund request was approved and the amount increased to \$900,000 to address increasing costs. To date \$613,802 in funds have been drawn down for project costs.

Jack Ahern provided the following details on the status of the project:

Rehabilitation of the subject building is nearing completion and is expected to finish by December 31, 2023. Components of the electrical system were difficult to obtain and caused a delay in project activities. The grant is expected to close by the scheduled date of December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Englund opened the floor to public comment on the projects.

Linda Mangones of Keene Housing took the floor to commend the County Commissioners, the County Grants Department and Southwest Regional Planning staff for all of their hard work on making these projects a reality.

Seeing no additional public comments, Commissioner Englund closed the public hearing at 8:52AM.

Commissioner Wozmak opened the second public hearing for discussion and public comment on the Community Development Block Grant project at 8:53AM.

Jack Ahern, Associate Planner with SWRPC explained that it is a requirement of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to hold public hearing while the project is underway to allow the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions about the project.

Jack Ahern described the project being discussed today as a Housing and Public Facilities CDBG grant in the amount of \$500,000 awarded to Cheshire County and sub-granted to Hundred Nights, Inc. The funds, less administrative costs, are to support the construction of a new emergency shelter for the unhoused at 122-124 Water Street. A Gap Fund request was approved and the amount increased to \$857,870. To date \$838,102 in funds have been drawn down for project costs.

Jack Ahern provided the following details on the status of the project:

Construction of the building has been completed ahead of the targeted date of April 2024 and a full Certificate of Occupancy was received from the City of Keene on July 6, 2023. The facility is currently operational and occupied for its intended uses.

The Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects.

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Seeing no public comments, Commissioner Wozmak closed the public hearing at 9:14AM.

I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

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

Master Agenda Item: #1130: Non-FMLA Leave Request – K. May

Action Expected: To discuss and assess the non-FLMA leave request.

Human Resources Director May requested a non-Family Medical Leave Act leave of absence for a Cheshire County employee who needed time off to take care of their family.

Following discussions, Commissioner Wozmak moved to approve the non-FMLA leave, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item: #1132: 2024 Health and Dental Proposals – S. Trombly

Action Expected: To discuss and assess proposals for 2024 health and dental plans.

Finance Director Trombly began the discussion surrounding health and dental plans by laying out the options. Trombly stated that Symetra is essentially the only option the County can utilize, and she recommended that the County renew with Symetra and deal with the increased cost. The annualized cost would move from 425,000 to 596,000, which is a 38-39% increase. She stated that if we were to ask for a 5% increase from our employees the County would have to dip into the fund slightly, if the County asks for a 10% increase, we may break even. If there was a 0% increase the fund balance would take a significant hit. The County has gone 10 years with less than 5% increases. Trombly said that the County cannot afford to have too low of a fund balance, and an increase, even one below 5% would help keep the fund healthy.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to approve the 4.5% increase for health plans, and no increase for dental plans, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

II. Scheduled Items

III. County Administrator

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

County Administrator Coates informed the Commissioners that County Project Director Bouchard submitted his resignation letter which would be active on December 21st, 2023. Coates stated that the County and himself were lucky to have Bouchard leading important projects, especially without raising taxes significantly. Coates and the Commissioners stated they would miss Bouchard and will remain grateful for his work and service.

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County Project Director Bouchard took the floor to ask the Commissioners to accept a bid from Allstate Construction, as they were the lowest cost out of the 3 companies that submitted bids to perform paving, ledge work, and basin repair at the Department of Corrections.

Following discussions, Commissioner Clark moved to approve the acceptance of the Allstate bid, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Coates spoke again and discussed plowing options for the County campuses. He stated that Minkler Paving is the strongest bid as they came in as the cheapest and most efficient bid.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to approve the acceptance of the Minkler bid, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 10:37 AM, Commissioner Wozmak moved to temporarily adjourn the meeting, to begin budget hearings which Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 2:14PM, the Commissioners re-opened the meeting, and Commissioners Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responded as present.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests for November 1, 2023, and the meeting minutes of October 18, 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.

X. Adjournment

At 2:36 PM, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
D. Bernstein
Director, Executive Services and
Communications

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

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