

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday March 2, 2016 09:30AM**  
**County Hall Building**  
**Commissioners Conference Room**  
**12 Court Street**  
**Keene, NH 03431**

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

**STAFF:** Assistant Finance Director Trombly, Superintendent Van Wickler, DOC Facilities Manager Barlow, Sheriff Rivera, Register of Deeds Tilton, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

At 9:30AM Chairman Rogers opened the meeting and recognized Assistant County Administrator Bouchard for the purpose of receiving the weekly operational report.

Bouchard said that the new County policy covering Correctional Officer certification has been sent to all NH Association (NHAC) County's members by the NHAC. He also reminded the Commissioners that the monthly meeting of the NHAC executive committee was this Friday at 10:00AM in Concord.

Bouchard said that Sheriff Rivera was at the meeting to bring the Commissioners up to date on the progress of the proposed dispatch center build-out plan and that he would address the issue shortly.

Bouchard then discussed the National Association of Counties (NACo) annual dues. **Following a short discussion Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the payment of the invoice and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.** Bouchard will process the invoice today.

He then said that Superintendent Van Wickler and facilities manager Barlow were attending the meeting today as a follow-up to the report given to the Commissioners last week, and that the Superintendent would review the report and answer any questions during the presentation this morning.

Bouchard then said that a public notice has been sent to the Sentinel for the delegation meeting scheduled for Monday March 14<sup>th</sup>, posted online on the County website, and placed in the County Hall building lobby.

He also said that the Right-to-Know training for elected officials and staff department managers that was cancelled due to an emergency in the speakers family has been rescheduled for March 21<sup>st</sup> and that a notification via email would be going out shortly.

Bouchard then discussed a recent article in a local publication that outlined the opposition to the proposed regional detention center in Bellows Falls, VT. He said that a non-binding town vote had rejected the creation of the facility by 1053 to 287. It is unknown at this time how the non-binding vote will affect the project.

This project is being monitored due to the potential impact on the number of federal inmates that are held at the County jail during pre-trial detention. If a second federal holding facility were built in the immediate area it could potentially negatively affect the amount of income that the County derives from the federal inmate holding program that currently exceeds \$1M a year.

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Superintendent Van Wickler was then recognized and discussed the February 23<sup>rd</sup> report from Granite State Automation at the conclusion of their work on the HVAC systems at the jail. He said that the systems were now running properly and it appears that the propane usage has dropped significantly due to both a mild winter and a now properly working HVAC system.

Van Wickler and Barlow were asked a number of questions concerning the work and the ability of the DOC facilities staff to maintain the system in its present state. The Commissioners were advised by Barlow that the staff could both monitor and maintain the system for all routine maintenance operations going forward. However, he recommended that it would still be important to engage Granite State on an annual basis to check controls and operations to maintain efficient operational conditions, especially as the systems age.

Barlow discussed that the entire system had undergone a complete “recommissioning” and normally the system would then be turned over to second vendor to “balance” the systems within the building to ensure proper air circulation and pressures are achieved throughout the system to ensure the entire system runs at optimum efficiency. He said that he believes that the balancing work doesn’t need to be done and that approximately \$10,000.00 can be saved by not having the work completed.

The Commissioners asked a number of other questions and learned that thus far, just over \$100,000.00 has been expended on this project. It was then decided to discuss the need for the system balancing at next week’s meeting.

Sheriff Rivera was then recognized and discussed the Emergency Management Performance Grant Program (EMPG) funding that is being used to partially complete the build-out of the new dispatch communications facility. He said that based on a very recent communication with the state grants staff a federally mandated environmental review will be required before any grant funds are expended. He anticipates that due to scheduling issues the process will take at least six (6) weeks to complete.

He also advised that a motion to reflect an amendment to the 2016 proposed budget for the addition of the grant funds being received will be presented at the delegation meeting on the March 14<sup>th</sup>. He said that the addition of the funds to the budget will have no impact on taxes or fund balance as the grant funds received will equal the funds expended.

Master Agenda Item #354: Elected Official Wage Discussion was taken-up. Director Trombly reviewed the spreadsheet that was given to the Commissioners that reflects the wages paid to the elected officials in all of the County’s in New Hampshire. A discussion began about what recommendations would be made to the delegation for their consideration at the March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. It was noted that any adjustments in wages would not occur until January 1, 2017 following the current year election cycles. The Commissioners will review the document and will take the topic up for further discussion at next week’s meeting.

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Master Agenda Item #356: Semi-annual Registry of Deeds report was then discussed and Register Tilton provided the following report to the Commissioners.

*As the County of Cheshire Register of Deeds, I provide this review for the year ending December 2015.*

*The real estate market recovery in Cheshire County is still not as robust as has been seen in other Counties. Number of sales and average selling price are starting to rise, but very slowly.*

*The Cheshire County Deeds website is used by the public to negotiate to the records search site as well as to access other property related information. Both the County and the NH Deeds websites provide detailed instructions and information that has proven helpful to the general public researching the records.*

*E-recordings continue to increase as a percentage of recordings done. Moving to e-recordings reduced handling cash/checks and paper documents. In 2015, the E-recording revenue deposited electronically over \$ 1.75 million. It also provides timeliness and convenience to businesses who are located throughout the country.*

*Last year we implemented our alternate search/copy service called Tapestry, a web-based product which allows large scale users (and the occasional search from home customer) access and printing options without having to set up an in-house account. At the end of each month revenues are directly deposited into our bank account. The revenues to the County from Tapestry were \$5,935.00 with no cost to the County.*

*Old registry books were scanned to allow the images to be available in the on-line search and then the books are printed as new smaller volumes taking up less space, allowing us to more than double our available shelving space. The department scanned old books for the year 1904 and updated the Grantor/Grantee paper indexes for the years 1900 to 1910. Old plans were also repaired then scanned and placed on-line. In the spring of 2015 a new recording station was installed that allows more books to be scanned. The scanner was purchased for minimal cost and provides the employees an opportunity to work while standing.*

*Transfer tax revenue collected and sent to the State of NH:*

2015: \$4,460,115.00                      2014: \$4,246,523.00                      2013: \$3,382,080.00

*The County portion of revenues from the transfer tax 4% commission:*

In 2015: \$185,838.00                      2014: \$176,938.00                      2013: \$140,920.00.

*Revenue collected for L-Chip and sent to the State of NH:*

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2015: \$175,200.00                      2014: \$156,480.00                      2013: \$204,912.00

*Revenue turned over to Cheshire County:*

2015: \$540,204.00                      2014: \$493,472.00                      2013: \$551,317.00

Tilton answered questions and was thanked by the Commissioners for her report.

The Weekly Census was reviewed.

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

**The minutes of February 24, 2016 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes as presented, noting a possible grammatical inconsistency in the public hearing portion of the minutes that may be confusing to some readers. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed.

**At 11:19AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Graves and upon vote the motion passed with unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk