

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Tuesday, May 12, 2015 09:30am
Maplewood Nursing Home
201 River Road,
Westmoreland, NH 03467

PRESENT: Commissioners Stillman Rogers, Chuck Weed, and Peter Graves.

STAFF: Finance Director Trombly, MNH Administrator Kindopp, Conservation District Manager Littleton, and Assistant County Administrator (ACA) Bouchard

Chairman Rogers opened the meeting at 9:35AM and District Manager Littleton was recognized for the purpose of discussing Master Agenda Item #230: Westmoreland Garden Recap 2014.

Littleton presented a number of documents that detailed the success of the Westmoreland Garden collaborative project between the County and Antioch University. Approximately \$7,000.00 of vegetable were provided to a number of community resources last year including the Community Kitchen in Keene. The following is an excerpt taken from the report:

“The Westmoreland Garden Project is an extension of CGC’s (Antioch’s Community Garden Connections Program – Editor) programmatic efforts and complements the County of Cheshire’s mission and agricultural interests. By engaging students and local community members in the planting, tending, and harvesting of produce at this site, we are furthering, the work of Cheshire County, fulfilling CGC’s mission, and strengthening community partnerships. Highlights from the 2014 growing season include:

- *CGC staff conservatively engaged over 100 volunteers*
- *Held 32 volunteer opportunities including our weekly “Garden Parties” (see Appendix B for sample flyer)*
- *Provided 640 total volunteer hours, which equates to over \$7,680 of in-kind services from volunteers during the 2014 growing season*
- *Donated 2,115 pounds of produce to community members with limited access to fresh, local food*

This growing season, CGC staff and volunteers grew and donated 2,060 pounds of produce to The Community Kitchen (Keene, NH). An additional amount of 55 pounds was donated to CGC garden sites through a pilot program called Fair Share. The success of this past growing season would not have been possible without our community partnerships, particularly the relationship with the County of Cheshire and Cheshire County Conservation District, which facilitated the ability of CGC to grow and tend food on this unique plot of land”.

A discussion of the various programs offered by Antioch and the Conservation District were covered and Littleton recapped the activities of the Garden project and spoke to the upcoming growing season. More information on the Conservation District’s activities can be found here:

<http://www.cheshireconservation.org/>

Master Agenda Item #231: Regional Public Health Network grant renewal/extension for State Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017

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ACA Bouchard presented for signatures the Regional Public Health Network grant renewal/extension for State Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017 that extends funding for the two years at \$262,188 for each year. Cheshire County is fiscal sponsor for this grant that provides funds to Monadnock Voices for Prevention for regional substance misuse prevention and regional substance use disorders continuum of care, and funds to Cheshire Medical Center for the public health and radiological emergency preparedness and coordination of the regional public health advisory committee. A short discussion began about the programs delivered to the public by the grant recipients and Bouchard mentioned that one of the programs covered under this funding is the “Drug Take Back” program that is run at least once a year by the local police departments to get unwanted and unneeded prescription drugs turned in for proper disposal.

Following discussion Commissioner Weed moved to approve entering into a contract with the State of New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services to amend the Public Health Network grant contract agreement for SFY14 & SFY15 to extend the grant term to June 30, 2017 and provide \$272,118 funds for SFY16 and \$272,118 funds for SFY17. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioners Weed and Rogers who were required to execute the documents then signed the grant renewals.

Old Business was then taken-up and the NH House approved Senate Bill 8 which finalized the changes to allow nursing homes to receive an additional \$3.9 million they anticipated this fiscal year, by using a surplus in the home and community-based services over the past two fiscal years was discussed. The impact on the receipt of other funding received in past years is yet to be determined.

Administrator Kindopp was then recognized and discussed the following items;

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has “rebased” the system under which nursing homes are awarded stars under their quality measurement program. The changes undercut the existing system and in practice lowers a number of nursing homes ratings despite no changes in the quality or quantity of the care provided, or the condition of the facilities. The change was done largely without provider input and is seen as arbitrary and capricious by the provider community who feel they are being punished for no discernable reason.

Kindopp said that one of the results of these changes could be that the private nursing homes who use anti-psychotic medicines to help their behaviorally challenged residents will now be slower to accept more of these residents based on not being able “to meet their needs”.

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This will in turn potentially push more of the behaviorally challenged residents to County Nursing homes. The net result will be to make it far more difficult for any County Nursing home to obtain a five (5) star rating based on the new rules.

Kindopp then discussed the meeting that was held with the State on the question of renovating Maplewood and trying to determine the “tipping point” of such a project where the amount of work to be accomplished would push the project over a line that would then require the facility to be completely upgraded to current building codes and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements thereby greatly increasing the cost of any project. Kindopp said that the outcome of the meeting was that no one can tell what that “tipping point” nor are there any metrics around this type of project that would indicate when this point would be reached.

Kindopp then discussed the implementation of the County’s policy of “On-call” pay for the Nursing staff which wasn’t being used by the Nursing department. She said that the impact on the budget would negligible and its implementation would bring the Nursing department in-line with the rest of the County departments that require twenty-four (24) on-call support.

An extended discussion began concerning staff recruitment and retention ideas for the Nursing home and the challenges that all County medical providers are facing in attracting qualified staff. A number of suggestions were reviewed and examined including a possible change in the tuition reimbursement program to attract staff that are interested in continuing their training and education in the field.

Marketing and recruitment ideas were discussed and will be followed-up with HR to determine the costs and feasibility of implementing some of the suggested ideas.

Kindopp then discussed the planned trip to the Green House facility in Cohoes NY on May 21st and Commissioner Graves is interested in attending if he can work it into his calendar.

The Commissioners thanked Kindopp for her report and it was agreed that more follow-up will be needed to close out some of the items discussed.

Commissioner Weed then moved to accept the Weekly Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Graves. Upon vote the motion unanimously.

The Weekly Census was reviewed.

Old Business was then revisited for a short discussion on the status of the Electronic Monitoring program and the budget impact of the program. Director Trombly said that some good progress had been made in cost control by Department of Corrections personnel but that the budget would most likely be significantly short for the year. She said that the issue may need to be addressed

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at the mid-year budget review with the Delegation in August. Commissioner Rogers will contact Superintendent Van Wickler to get an update.

The minutes of May 6, 2015 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes with amendment. Commissioner Graves seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners Calendar was then reviewed with no changes made.

At 12:18PM 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 unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

P. Graves, Clerk