

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, October 1, 2014 9:30AM
Administration Building
33 West Street
Keene, NH 03431

PRESENT: Commissioners Pratt, Rogers, and Zerba

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

GUESTS: 2 members of the public.

Chairman Pratt opened the meeting at 9:30AM recognizing Administrator Wozmak for the purpose of providing the weekly operations updates. Wozmak said that there were no new events that arose over the last week that required the attention of the Commissioners this week.

Chairman Pratt then recognized Conservation District Manager Littleton who provided the following semi-annual report:

Cheshire County Conservation District

Soil Health

- With funding provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) we purchased an Aerway aerator for farmers to rent to alleviate surface compaction and a Wood Ash and Lime Spreader to raise the soil ph.
- Ongoing rental of soil health equipment including the no-till seeder, roller crimper, aerator, and sub-soiler
- Offered an educational workshop and equipment demonstration at Stuart and John's Sugarhouse in Westmoreland with UNH Cooperative Extension that drew about forty people. This focused on no-till planting and seeding as well as other techniques and equipment to improve soil health.

Water Quality

- Boggy Meadow Farm Barnyard Run-off and Milkhouse Waste Project construction is underway with funding through the NH State Conservation Committee Conservation Grant Program
- Offering Skidder bridge rentals to forest land owners doing timber harvests.
- Working with partners on planning the Boyce Pond Dam Removal riparian plantings through funding from the NH State Conservation Committee Conservation Grant Program
- Offered an all-day erosion control field day in partnership with Hillsborough County.
- Offered a Rain Garden workshop for landowners on how to garden to protect water quality.

Wildlife

- With the Hillsborough County Conservation District we offered a Xerces Society training on managing habitat for pollinator conservation.
- We are kicking off our Cheshire County Pollinator Initiative with funding from the USDA NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant and the NH State Conservation Committee. This will be a three year project to create habitat for pollinators and

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education farmers and the general public on their importance, diversity, and how to manage for them.

- Submitted proposals for an aquatic organism passage project in Swanzey NH to the NH Department of Environmental Services Aquatic Resources Mitigation Fund.

Farm Viability

- Kicked off a USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Partnership grant in partnership with Land For Good, the Monadnock Conservancy, and UNH Cooperative Extension. This will work to connect conservation land owners with farmers and create or strengthen mutually beneficial land tenure relationships.
- Continued USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program grant to promote direct sales of farm products in Cheshire County
- Continued work with Keene and Walpole Farmer's Markets to double SNAP benefits through a USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant and partnership with the Wholesome Wave Foundation
- Continued work with partners to run Monadnock Menus – the aggregation and distribution program for wholesale food buyers and farms in the region that is funded by the USDA Rural Development – Rural Business Enterprise Grant.
- In partnership with Hannah Grimes and the Monadnock Localvores we offered 27 scholarships to youth interested in attending a farm camp this summer.
- Acting as the lead contact for Antioch University's Community Garden Connections Program to farm at the Maplewood Garden.

The Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning the program and discussed the Conservation Districts budget, funding, staffing, programs and plans. The Maplewood gardens project being run in concert with Antioch College was discussed at length as was the farm equipment rental program. Littleton said that in addition to the general public programs, approximately 120 local farms are being assisted by the Conservation District.

The Commissioners said that she was doing a very good job managing the Conservation District functions, and thanked her for her report.

The Commissioners then reviewed the Master Item List and inquired about activities at the farm. Administrator Wozmak said that overall there were no problems to report but that the washout on River Road had been recently looked by a local contractor and a plan to fix at least part of the problem was being considered.

Wozmak then discussed the status of the boundary survey project that was underway and reminded the Commissioners of the previous week's conversation concerning the remaining research work that needs to be done to complete the full boundary map of the County property. A

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discussion began concerning the amount of work that still needs to be completed and the possible avoidance of a full ground EDM survey that is projected to cost approximately \$27,000.00 if the deeds searches reveal congruence with the abutters deeds. **Following discussion Commissioner Rogers moved to allocate the requested \$2,000.00 to complete the deed and document searches for the County property in Westmoreland. Commissioner Zerba seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Commissioner Zerba moved to accept the Weekly Manifest and was seconded by Commissioner Rogers. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of September 24, 2014 were then reviewed and Commissioner Rogers moved to accept the minutes as presented. Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Commissioners Calendars for September and October and the Weekly Census were reviewed.

At 10:53AM pursuant to RSA 91-A (II) (a), (b) and (c), Commissioner Pratt moved to go into non-public session to discuss the dismissal, promotion or compensation of a public employee or the disciplining of such employee, without that employee having requested an open meeting. Upon vote to enter non-public session Commissioner Pratt, Zerba and Rogers vote Yea.

As a result of a vote taken in non-public session Commissioner Rogers moved to increase the hourly compensation offered to T. B. as an RN Supervisor at Maplewood Nursing Home to a rate of \$25.00 per hour based on her training, experience, and education. (This is re-vote of last week's vote for this candidate. The candidate had rejected the previous offer due to insufficient compensation). Following discussion Commissioner Pratt seconded the motion with Commissioner Zerba saying he would not support the motion. The motion was tabled.

A lengthy discussion of the compensation plans for the nursing staff took place with Administrator Kindopp and Administrator Wozmak and a number of issues were discussed concerning the storage of qualified nursing personnel and the non-competitive pay scale that the County is now working under and what can be done to be able to attract qualified personnel. Following discussion, Commissioner Rogers re-introduced his motion to reconsider the hire of T. B. and to increase the hourly compensation offered to T. B. as an RN Supervisor at Maplewood Nursing Home to a rate of \$25.00 per hour based on her training, experience, and education. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 11:17AM The Commissioners unanimously voted to return to public session.

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A discussion of the upcoming New Hampshire Association of Counties conference scheduled for October 26 – 28 was taken up and a meeting scheduled for later in the day at Hillsborough Nursing Home to discuss Managed Medicaid was also covered.

At 11:43AM there being no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Rogers moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion seconded by Commissioner Zerba and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Zerba, Clerk