



## COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

### Minutes

This meeting will be conducted in person and via Zoom at  
County Hall  
12 Court Street  
Keene NH, 03431

**Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656**

**Meeting ID: 409 748 8803**

**Pin #: 603123**

**Start Time 8:30 AM**

**Present:** Commissioners Terry Clark, Claudia Stewart, and Skipper DiBernardo

**Absent:**

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director May, Maplewood Facilities Director Newman, Treatment Court and Behavioral Health Court Coordinator/Project Director Welsh, and Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein

**Guests:** Bart Fromuth (Freedom Energy)

### **Public Comments**

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made.

### **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 #1329: Freedom Energy – A. Newman & Freedom Energy

**Action Expected: To receive a presentation from Freedom Energy representatives.**

Bart Fromuth from Freedom Energy presented data from a spreadsheet showing usage and costs. The group examined rates from CPCNH, which increased from 13.5 to 14.5 cents per kilowatt hour, and compared these to Freedom's proposed rates around 10.5 cents. The discussion highlighted how small rate changes could significantly impact the annual expenditure, with a recent bill at 14.75 cents per kilowatt hour suggesting a potential annual cost of around \$416,000 if multiplied across 12 months.

Fromuth said the 10.543 cents per kilowatt hour 18-month plan from Shell MP2 is the lowest-priced option, with potential savings of \$145,000 per year compared to the current rate. He noted that while Shell MP2 offered the lowest rate, their 3% add-delete clause was less favorable than the 10% clauses offered by other suppliers. Bart also explained market trends and suggested that an 18-month contract might be more prudent than a 12-month contract due to current market conditions and the likelihood of future rate fluctuations.

**Commissioner DiBernardo made a motion to contract with Freedom Energy for 18 months effective 03/01/26 to 09/01/27. Commissioner Stewart seconded. The motion passed 2-1 with Commissioner Clark voting no.**

Master Agenda Item #1328: Semi-Annual Report, Treatment Court – A. Welsh

**Action Expected: To receive an informational report on the last six months of operations from Treatment Court.**

1. Treatment Court and Behavioral Health Court Coordinator/Project Director Welsh began her report. She stated that Cheshire County had 33 overdose deaths between 2024 and most of 2025. She said that for the state of NH overdose deaths peaked in 2017, lowered a bit until another rise in 2022, and lowered in 2024. 2025 rates are the lowest they have been since 2014. Welsh attributes lower deaths to medication assisted treatment such as methadone.

Commissioner Stewart asked if it was a requirement for treatment court. Welsh said no, but there are a lot more providers in the community which has resulted in more availability for those who need it.

The treatment court has had 49 participants successfully complete the program, and 56 have attended but not completed it. 17 participants are active in the program.

The average age of participants is 38-42. There is a slight difference in males to females. 53-47% respectively.

The primary drug of choice is overwhelmingly opioids. Cocaine is second.

Around a third of entrants begin the program while being unhoused.

100% of the 2025 graduates left the program renting their own apartments.

Welsh highlighted its cost-effectiveness compared to incarceration, with a savings of \$53,662 per participant per year. She discussed the program's success in reducing recidivism and its various community partnerships.

### **County Administrator**

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

1. County Administrator Coates said the County was set to receive \$936,000 from Senator Shaheen's CDS funding to upgrade communications infrastructure for Southwest NH District Fire Mutual Aid.

Additionally, the County is set to receive \$300,000 from Congresswoman Goodlander for portable radios for the Sheriff's office.

2. House bill 1427 which was related to municipal bonding failed in Committee.

3. Coates said the budget is completed and ready for a vote on the third Monday of March on the 16<sup>th</sup>.

**III. Old Business**

**IV. New Business**

1. Commissioner Clark said the NH Supreme Court put out a ruling

**V. Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of February 4, 2026

**Commissioner Stewart made a motion to accept the manifest and minutes of February 4, Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**VI. Calendar**

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

**VII. General Discussion for Commissioners**

**VIII. Nonpublic Sessions:**

**At 9:58AM Commissioner Clark made a motion to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (c). Commissioner Stewart seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of the non-public the Commissioner's voted to accept a letter as informational.**

**At 10:13AM the Commissioners unanimously voted to re-enter the public session.**

**IX. Adjournment**

**At 10:14 AM Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner DiBernardo seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes Recorded by:  
Davis Bernstein  
Director of Executive Services & Communications

Minutes Reviewed by:  
Commissioner DiBernardo  
Clerk, Cheshire County Commissioners