



## COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday, February 26, 2025

### Minutes

This meeting will be conducted in person and via Zoom at  
Maplewood Nursing Home  
201 River Road  
Westmoreland, NH 03467

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

**Meeting ID: 409 748 8803**

**Pin #: 603123**

**Start Time 8:30 AM**

**Present:** Commissioners Terry Clark and Claudia Stewart

**Absent:** Commissioner Skipper DiBernardo

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Safety Director Perrin, Grants Manager Bansley, Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein, and Superintendent Iosue.

**Guests:** Jack Ahern (Southwest Regional Planning Commission)

### **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.

1. HR Director May said she and Superintendent Iosue have a request for an officer to have a seven week unpaid leave of absence to pursue a passion project of journalism on the topic of human trafficking across the globe. The County has approved a similar leave of absence for a DOC employee in the past. Iosue said they are well staffed and could support this and would be happy to do so as the topic is relevant.

Finance Director Trombly asked if he is aware of the need for the employee to pay for their healthcare, retirement, and other benefits.

Iosue said he would make him aware if he is not already.

**Commissioner Clark made a motion to approve the unpaid leave of absence. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

2. Grants Manager Bansley said she has begun working on the response to the state's health and human services grant program for Connected Families. 1.2-1.3 million may be available.

3. Maplewood Administrator Kindopp said that she would be meeting with Select-board Chairman Snowdon of Westmoreland to discuss alternative routes to Maplewood.

4. Kindopp said she has been compelled to appear in court as the Administrator of Kindopp. It has little to do with a specific resident, but more so about existing law RSA 137-J surrounding guardianship of some residents.

## **II. Scheduled Items**

Master Agenda Item #1243: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Applications for Three Microenterprise Service Providers. – J. Ahern

**Action Expected: To hold a public hearing on CDBG applications.**

**The Chair opened the first public hearing for discussion of the Community Development Block Grant Applications at 8:30AM and read the public hearing notice.**

Jack Ahern, Grant Administrator, explained that CDBG funds are available to municipalities for economic development, public facilities and housing rehabilitation projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 in the housing and public facilities category, up to \$500,000 in the economic development category, up to \$750,000 in the microenterprise category, and \$25,000 for feasibility studies. Ahern provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that included the area HUD income limits.

Ahern provided a project handout. The proposed microenterprise applications are for up to \$750,000 to support three entities in southern NH: the Hannah Grimes Center in Keene (HGC), the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation in Keene (MEDC), and the Small Business Development Center in Durham (SBDC). The funding is used by each entity to provide training and technical assistance and, in some cases, micro loan servicing to low- and moderate-income micro-entrepreneurs. If the proposed applications are successful, the funds will be awarded to Cheshire County and sub-granted, less administrative costs, to the three sub-recipients.

Cheshire County has applied for and has been awarded Microenterprise funding for the HGC and SBDC each year since 2015. The HGC and SBDC are interested in continuing to be recipients of the Microenterprise funding in 2025. This is the first year that MEDC is applying for the program. The proposed activities meet the goals of “Support[ing] the development of a diversified economy” and “Support[ing] educational and training facilities which upgrade the skills of local residents” in Cheshire County’s Housing and Community Development Plan, last adopted in July of 2024. In total, for this program year the three entities anticipate serving an estimated 75 to 125 microenterprises.

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

**Seeing none, Commissioner Stewart motioned to close the Public Hearing on the Projects portion of the CDBG Block Grant Application Hearing. Seconded by Commissioner Stewart.**

**Commissioner Stewart motioned to approve the submittal of the applications, vote to authorize County Administrator Christopher Coates or County Commissioner Chair Terry Clark as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG applications, and vote to authorize Grants Manager Suzanne Bansley to serve as Authorized Designee to sign environmental review related documents, and upon approval of the CDBG applications, authorize the Authorized Designee to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Seconded by Commissioner Clark. The motion passed 2-0.**

Master Agenda Item #1244: Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan Relative to the Proposed Microenterprise Applications – J. Ahern

**Action Expected: To hold a public hearing on the Residential Assistance Plan.**

**The Chair motioned to open the second public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.**

Jack Ahern of SWRPC explained that if any permanent displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any permanently displaced household or business in a project using federal funds must be found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. Ahern noted that no permanent displacement is planned or anticipated at this time. Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does permanently displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds.

Chair calls for public comment.

**Seeing none, Commissioner Stewart motioned to close the second public hearing for discussion of the proposed RARA Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed 2-0.**

**Commissioner Stewart motioned to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed 2-0.**

Master Agenda Item #1245: DOC Transport Bus Request – D. Iosue

**Action Expected: Request to authorize additional \$4,229 expenditure over the original quote and currently approved \$158,000 for the buildout of the new DOC transportation Bus.**

1. Iosue explained his request for additional expenditure to build out a new DOC Transport bus. The additional cost was to be covered by funds from old, unused projects from 2018.

**Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the additional expenditure with funds to be pulled from rollovers. Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #1246: Semi-Annual Report, Safety Department – S. Perrin

**Action Expected: To receive an as informational as possible report on the last six months of operations by the Director of Safety.**

1. Safety Director Perrin said there were 126 incidents, 23 of which was medical. Perrin said it is important for employees to over report rather than under report so issues can be addressed rather than neglected or forgotten about.

He also mentioned conducting surveys and drills to prepare for potential disasters, including a cyber security breach drill and a hurricane drill. He also mentioned ongoing work with the elevator repair and renovations, emphasizing the need for quality control and infection control.

**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 Ruck-Up, a local organization that supports veterans in need of services has begun talks with the County about potential funding sources.

2. Coates said the Red Barn is nearly complete and a grand opening would be discussed during the warmer months. Coates said \$4,995 remains of the project but the grant has been exhausted.

III. **Old Business**

IV. **New Business**

V. **Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of February 19, 2025

**Commissioner Stewart made a motion to approve the manifests and minutes of February 19. Commissioner DiBernardo 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 11:00AM Commissioner Clark made a motion to enter into a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a). Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

*RSA 91-A:3, II (a) The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, **unless** the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.*

**At 11:43AM the Commissioners voted to unanimously exit the non-public. As a result of the non-public no decisions were made, and no actions were taken.**

IX. **Adjournment**

**At 11:44AM Commissioner Clark made a motion to adjourn, and Commissioner Stewart 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