



COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

This meeting will be conducted in person
and electronically (via Zoom) at

County Hall
Commissioner's Conference Room
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803

Pin #: 6031233

Start Time 08:30 AM

Present: Commissioners Jack Wozmak, Robert Englund, and Terry Clark

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director May, Superintendent Iosue, Grants Manager Bansley, Sheriff Rivera, Grants Assistant Robinson, and Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein

Guest(s): Executive Director of Building Community NH Minard

Public Comments

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made, at most three (3) minutes in length.

-At 8:42AM the Commissioners opened the meeting, and Commissioners Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responded as present.

I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

To receive, as informational, departmental updates requiring Commissioner review, participation, approval, and impactful departmental and operational issues.

-Seeing no public comment County Administrator Coates moved forward with the agenda.

-Grants Manager Bansley said she has been working with Executive Director of Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention Hirsch to attain a grant to perform broad domestic violence prevention services.

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1160: Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) Grant Agreement SFY25 – J. Robinson

Action Expected: Vote to accept and sign the grant agreement and associated documents for the VOCA grant for SFY25 (7/1/24-6/30/25) from the New Hampshire Department of Justice for \$50,000, which requires \$12,500 in match.

I, Terry M. Clark, Cheshire County Commissioner Clerk, do hereby certify that I am a duly elected Officer of the County of Cheshire. I hereby certify the following is a true copy of a vote taken at a meeting of the Commissioners of the County of Cheshire duly called and **held on March 13, 2024** at which a quorum of the Commissioners was present and voting.

Commissioner Englund made a motion to approve the following items pertaining to the grant. Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

VOTED: That Commissioner Chair John “Jack” G. Wozmak, J.D. or County Administrator Christopher C. Coates are hereby authorized on behalf of the County of Cheshire to enter into the VOCA SFY 25 (07-01-24 to 06-30-25 period) agreement with New Hampshire Department of Justice and to execute any and all documents, agreements and other instruments, and any amendments, revisions, or modifications thereto, as he/she may deem necessary, desirable, or appropriate to effect the purpose of this vote.

VOTED: That County Administrator Christopher C. Coates is hereby authorized on behalf of the County of Cheshire to enter into any subcontracts or subrecipient agreements as necessary to carry out the goals, objectives, and activities of the agreement.

VOTED: That Grants Specialist Jennifer Robinson is hereby appointed as the authorized certifying official and primary contact and liaison with regards to the above referenced agreement and is hereby authorized on behalf of the County of Cheshire to certify or sign vouchers or requisitions for payments or claims to the agreement.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution has not been amended or repealed and remains in full force and effect as of the date of the execution of this document. I further certify that it is understood that the State of New Hampshire will rely on this certificate as evidence that the person listed above currently occupies the position indicated and that they have full authority to bind the Municipality. This authority **remains valid for thirty (30) days** from the date of this certificate.

Master Agenda Item #1161: Semi-Annual Report, Sheriff -E. Rivera

Action Expected: To receive an as informational as possible report of the least six months of operation from Sheriff Rivera.

-Sheriff Rivera began his report by saying that they recently brought on a full-time Deputy Sheriff.

Rivera said their K-9 unit has been performing several services across the County. He has been doing a great job, and multiple agencies have said that his training is going very well.

The communications infrastructure project is going very smoothly.

There has been an increase in transfers to and from the Court.

Rivera said several organizations have requested the services of the Sheriff's Department; he asked that the Commissioner's consider options for the future to handle the increased growth.

III. County Administrator

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

-Executive Director of Building Community in NH was recognized to speak by Administrator Coates. Minard began the discussion by stating he was looking to see if there was some sort of partnership that could be created with Cheshire County to support a refugee resettlement program in the community.

Minard said that his organization supports refugees that have been legally allowed into the United States. The majority of refugees have been coming from Ukraine, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and more.

Welcome Core is a program that invites local families to sponsor refugees coming into the state. Refugee resettlement has been focused in Manchester, Concord, and Nashua.

Minard would like to see a study done in and around Cheshire County to examine how many employers could benefit from hiring employees, if the local schools have the resources to support these students with various languages, whether there is enough housing, and how this program could create a positive economic impact.

Commissioner Wozmak said he liked this idea. He stated that one of the best ways to address the worker shortage is to bring in more foreign-born workers due to the fact that the natural change (birth minus deaths) is at a net negative in every New England state. Ultimately it will not be possible for the U.S to catch up with the worker shortage for a generation, unless immigration is able to bridge the gap.

The Commissioners would like to examine this further. Minard thanked the County Administrator and the Commissioners for being receptive to this plan.

-Coates said Mayor Kahn will be attending next week's Commissioner's Meeting at CCEMS.

-Coates stated that the next Cheshire Delegation meeting is this coming Monday, the 18th at 7:00PM.

The County budget will include a tax decrease this year, which is unique for the state.

-Coates said he will be meeting with the board of Southwest NH Fire Mutual Aid about the funding request to Congress to update aging communications infrastructure.

This Thursday the 14th, there will be a meeting held between stakeholders related to the infrastructure project.

-Coates said he has been asked to teach a course at Keene State College on Friday the 15th.

-Next Thursday the 22nd is the Greater Monadnock Collaborative Gala at 5:00PM.

-Coates said Bernstein and himself met with Enterprise fleet management to discuss how the County can modernize its fleet management system.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

-Commissioner Clark stated the first Cheshire County Community Power Governance will be taking place tonight, Wednesday March 13th at 6:30PM.

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of March 6, 2024.

Commissioner Englund moved to accept the manifests and minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Calendar

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

VIII. General Discussion for Commissioners

IX. Nonpublic Sessions:

A nonpublic session pursuant to 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.

- C. Coates

Item tabled.

X. Adjournment

At 10:29 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
D. Bernstein
Director, Executive Services and
Communications

Reviewed and approved by:
T. Clark, Clerk
Board of Commissioners