



COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday, July 10, 2024

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

Department of Corrections
850 Marlboro Road
Keene, NH 03431

Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803

Pin #: 603123

Start Time 08:30 AM

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

Absent:

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

Guest(s): Executive Director of MEDC Cody Morrison

Public Comments

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

-At 8:34AM the Commissioners opened the meeting, and all three commissioners 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.

1. Finance Director Trombly stated the County received over \$18,000 in “lost funding” owed to the County.
2. Superintendent Iosue said the paving project has been delayed by several weeks.
3. Sheriff Rivera said his department is receiving more frequent Right to Know (RSA 91-A) requests.

The Commissioners said that reaching out the County insurance provider, Primex, will be a good place to start.

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1189: Cost Allocation Plan, Indirect Cost Rate Policy, & Fringe Benefit Rate Policy – S. Bansley

Action Expected: Vote to approve and execute a Cost Allocation Plan and corresponding Indirect Cost Rate Policy and Fringe Benefit Rate Policy for the County to meet the requirements of the Uniformed Grant Guidance.

1. Grants Manager Bansley stated the indirect cost rate for the County was around 11%. The Commissioners are to sign a form accepting the indirect cost rate policy figures.

This will improve efficiency as those who utilize grant funding, ie. individual employees will be able to utilize an equation to allocate funding for benefits, without having to go line by line entering individual items such as health insurance, disability, dental, etc.

Commissioner Clark made a motion to adopt and execute a Cost Allocation Plan and corresponding Indirect Cost Rate Policy and Fringe Benefit Rate Policy for the County to meet the requirements of the Uniformed Grant Guidance, and Commissioner Englund seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

2. Coates said the updated county handbook will be reviewed by the Commissioners this month, after staff has completed the first round of updates. Coates said after this the County will examine additional policies for the County including grants policy and general operational policies.

Master Agenda Item #1190: Dispatch Project Updates – E. Rivera

Action Expected: To receive an as informational as possible report on the updates regarding the ongoing Sheriff's Dispatch project.

1. Sheriff Rivera said that the project is moving forward well, but the cost to perform this project will increase. Currently there is an issue with a lease for a tower site. The property has switched hands many times, and the new owners are unsure if they want the communications equipment on their site.

Master Agenda Item #1191: Monadnock Economic Development Corporation Impact and Budget Updates – C. Morrison

Action Expected: To receive an as informational as possible report on the impact of MEDC over the last year within the context of the upcoming budget cycle.

1. Executive Director Morrison gave the following report:

Summary: FY24 was a productive year for the Monadnock Economic Development Corp. (MEDC) as new programs were launched and we grew organizational capacity. \$1.4 million in new funding programs were announced for childcare and brownfields environmental cleanup. MEDC activities in FY24 helped lead to the creation of 57 housing units, 35 new childcare slots, over 40 businesses assisted, and leverage over \$16 million in public and private investment. MEDC continues to implement a new business model created during 2020-2022 intended to diversify programs, prioritize community engagement, and address urgent local needs.

The following items feature highlights within individual programs.

Program Manager Position: Using ARPA funding from Cheshire County, MEDC hired a Program Manager in November 2023 to help oversee the revolving loan fund and business technical assistance programs. The position is held by a Keene resident, who is a former Regional Director for the New Hampshire Small Business Development Center. The position is responsible for helping with business expansion among start-up companies, micro businesses, medium, and large businesses alike. The position is expected to be self-sustaining by fall 2024.

Childcare Program: As part of MEDC's "Bringing It Home Project" (BIHP) childcare pilot program launched in FY24, we provided technical assistance to six start-up providers, who are expected to create 35 new childcare slots in the region. As part of the program, MEDC will be providing grant funding for home renovations for the providers to meet local code and licensure requirements. The providers reside in Keene, Swanzey, Fitzwilliam, Gilsum, Alstead, and New Ipswich. MEDC was also awarded \$987 from the Rotary Club of Keene to provide educational reading materials for five providers. This will support literacy and kindergarten readiness among children in the care of providers enrolled in the BIHP program. The childcare program has garnered statewide attention, receiving media coverage in Business NH Magazine and NH Bulletin. A \$1,000,000+ funding program from the NH Community Development Finance Authority was modeled after the Bringing It Home Project. News article link – Business NH Magazine (March 2024)

Revolving Loan Fund Program:

MEDC provided gap financing to the 310 Marlboro Street project in Keene, a housing project that will create 57 new housing units through the construction of a three-story addition on top of an existing two-story factory in Keene. As part of this project, MEDC also helped with deal structuring and was able to secure additional gap funding from a third party to help make the project happen.

FY25: Year Ahead

Summary: at the time of this writing, MEDC has \$1.4 million in pending loan requests and \$300,000 in pending grant requests. The childcare program is expected to expand significantly. The brownfields environmental cleanup program is expected to clean up to four sites and has the potential to double in size next year. The Monadnock Housing Development Fund will grow as businesses invest in the fund and MEDC funds housing projects. MEDC will be looking to hire additional staff to grow capacity and help administer programs.

Childcare Program: MEDC is expanding its childcare program. Our target for the year is to provide business technical assistance, licensure consulting, and quality/network support for twenty new providers. Work to recruit providers in new communities is underway to ensure geographic distribution for the program. To date, we have leads on providers in Peterborough, Walpole, and Hinsdale. The second cohort of BIHP providers is expected to start this fall, resulting in another group of five providers receiving services and becoming eligible for home renovation grant funding. A \$600,000 Congressional Directed Spending Request is pending, which would allow MEDC to rapidly expand its childcare programming in the region.

In April 2024, MEDC was awarded a \$30,000 capacity grant from the NH Community Development Finance Authority to grow organizational capacity to sustainably serve providers long-term. This funding will help support regional network development, public-private partnerships, and strategic planning.

Brownfields Environmental Cleanup Program: cleanup of contaminated industrial sites will begin in late 2024/early 2025. By cleaning these commercial sites, they will be ready for redevelopment for businesses, housing, or public spaces. Capitalized by an EPA grant in

2023, MEDC has \$600,000 in low-interest loans available to developers and \$200,000 in grant funding available to nonprofits and municipalities to clean brownfield sites.

Target sites for clean-up during FY25 include W.W. Cross Co. in Jaffrey, McGoldrick Paper Company in Hinsdale, and AC Lawrence Tannery in Winchester.

Once MEDC's first round of brownfields funding has been committed, we can expand the program further. NH Dept. of Environmental Services and the EPA are encouraging MEDC to apply for up to \$3,000,000 in non-competitive supplemental funding for the program, which would allow us to triple our efforts in this area. This could happen in early 2025, with funding available by October 2025. MEDC has been working with the Southwest Region Planning Commission on the program, who has an active brownfields assessment program.

Housing: in partnership with the Monadnock Interfaith Project (MIP), MEDC launched the Monadnock Housing Development Fund in 2024. The program was created to provide flexible capital and gap funding for local housing projects. MIP has been leading grassroots advocacy efforts to bring awareness to the importance of a regional housing development fund. MEDC's history of commercial lending in the region made this a natural partnership, as we are strongly interested in increasing the region's housing stock. The Monadnock Housing Development Fund is administered by MEDC, who handles business development and loan servicing. The

program is capitalized through MEDC's existing loan program and \$50,000 from the City of Keene. The Housing Development Fund is expected to grow in FY25 as multiple businesses have indicated interest in investing in the fund.

Town-By-Town: Below is a brief list of MEDC's activities throughout Cheshire County. While not conclusive, this list is intended to provide a snapshot of our involvement with communities and businesses.

- **Chesterfield:** ongoing work with the Economic Development Committee on the revitalization planning of the former Electrosonics property. The Town can apply to MEDC's brownfields grant program in the future, which would fund the cleanup of the site and make it ready for redevelopment.
- **Jaffrey:** work with businesses on expansion prospects. Work with the Town regarding the W.W. Cross site cleanup and redevelopment. Providing gap funding to a business for expansion in summer 2024.
- **Swanzy:** attended Swanzy Economic Development Advisory Committee meetings. Business retention visits with multiple Swanzy businesses. Business expansion planning with three Swanzy businesses.
- **Keene:** Work with several businesses on expansion planning. Work with several developers on deal structuring for commercial, childcare, and housing expansion. Provided gap funding to a housing project that will create 57 new apartments.
- **Rindge:** supported Franklin Pierce University's pursuit of federal funding for various on-campus projects. Expansion planning with one business.
- **Troy:** Work with a business considering relocating to Troy.
- **Winchester:** Work with Winchester Economic Development Corp. and the State of New Hampshire on business recruitment prospects for Stone Mountain Business Park. Discussion with Town officials on brownfields cleanup funding for the AC Lawrence Tannery site.
- **Hinsdale:** ongoing assistance to Hinsdale Economic Development Corp. (HEDC) and the Town to identify grant funding for infrastructure improvements. Close work with HEDC Development Liaison Max Beebe to make connections in New Hampshire's economic development ecosystem. Active assistance to HEDC with business recruitment planning following the announcement that (company name) was offshoring 80 jobs in Hinsdale to China. Work with a business that showed interest in relocating to Hinsdale.

- **Walpole:** Assisted local officials in their pursuit of 3-phase power expansion in support of retaining Bensonwood and businesses in the nearby Industrial Park. Work with the Black River Coop on start-up planning and site selection. Provided technical assistance to multiple Walpole businesses.
- **Fitzwilliam:** Attended Fitzwilliam Economic Development Advisory Committee meetings to discuss child care and housing.

III. County Administrator

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

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of July 3, 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:

X. Adjournment

At 10:40 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