



COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Wednesday, July 16, 2025

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, Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein, County Attorney McLaughlin, and Superintendent Iosue

Guests:

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: Superintendent Iosue said Captain Phillips has been named as the new superintendent of the Department of Corrections. Iosue said they are taking steps together to work on the transition over the next six weeks.

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1283: Semi-Annual Report, County Attorney – C. McLaughlin

Action Expected: To receive an informational report on the last six months of operations from the County Attorney

1: County Attorney McLaughlin presented the following report, the Cheshire County Attorney's Office has had one personnel change in this six-month period. During this six-month period, 157 felony case files were referred to our office, and a Victim/Witness Coordinator was assigned to all of these cases. We have indicted 123 individuals, on a total of 311 charges. There were three cases that proceeded to trial, and no misdemeanor appeals. 93 cases were resolved prior to trial, by plea. Our office reviewed 179 DCYF reports, and 28 reports from the New Hampshire Bureau of Adult and Elderly Services (BEAS). We handled

42 Violations of Probation on 29 cases, and 14 Superior Court Petitions to Annul with a total of 23 charges.

Over the past 6 months at any given time there have been between 16 and 18 participants in the Cheshire County Treatment Court Program. Currently there are 14 active participants in the Cheshire County Treatment Court program with 4 on absconded status. We have had 2 participants who graduated within the last 6 months and 3 participants terminated from the program. In addition, over the past 6 months at any given time there have been between 15 and 17 participants in the Behavioral Health Court Program. Currently, 6 participants are involved in the program on a pre-trial basis as a condition of bail, and 9 participants are involved with the program as a condition of their sentences in either Circuit or Superior Court.

In this six-month period, 3 cases were referred to the Restorative Justice Program. The Keene Police Department Circuit Court Prosecutor Program had 894 cases in the first half of this year, and the Regional Circuit Court Prosecutor Program has had 232 cases. Lastly, the Domestic Violence Prosecutor reviewed 21 Felony Domestic Violence cases this period.

County Attorney McLaughlin said with the swing of the pendulum towards less incarceration, those with substance use disorders are not going to prison but rather receive treatment for their addiction.

Commissioner DiBernardo asked if there were standard policies dealing with illegal immigrants in the legal system.

County Attorney McLaughlin said there is no policy in the County Attorney's office as the policies on dealing with illegal immigration and I.C.E is in the local police departments.

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 presented a *Multi Year Employment Contract Policy* to the Commissioners. Coates said the Delegation requested a firmer policy outlining the order of operations for approving multi year employment contracts since there was an issue with it in 2024 with the Delegation Chair putting forward a multi-year employment contract without additional approval. This policy outlines current practices and cements it into policy.

The draft policy is as follows:

“Consistent with the annual budget practices in place, this policy outlines the approval process for collective bargaining agreements and multi-year employment contracts that fall outside the normal budget cycle. These instances are infrequent but may include situations such as union re-openers during an active contract.

Any multi-year employment contract approved by the Cheshire County Commissioners that obligates future budget appropriations such as union contracts or individual employment

agreements must receive approval from the Executive Committee of the Cheshire County Delegation or its designated committee, such as the Personnel Committee.”

Commissioner Clark stated he disagreed with the policy as he said it dilutes the responsibility of the Cheshire County Commissioners unnecessarily.

Commissioner Stewart said that if the Delegation already approves multi year contracts such as vehicle leases and union contracts, adding this to that list seems like a continuation of standard practices.

Commissioner Clark said that since someone in the Delegation caused this original issue with multi year contracts there is no reason for the Commissioners to cement this piece of policy.

Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein will make changes to the policy as recommended by the Commissioners and will bring the policy back for consideration on July 30.

2: Coates said Cheshire Medical Center successfully pushed through the issues with the Keene water main last week, keeping the hospital operating normally.

3: Coates said the Keene Sentinel is doing a story on the HandyMan Program.

4: Coates said the NACO conference attended by Commissioner Clark and himself went well.

Clark said they participated in a vote imploring Congress to pass a bill that would provide a reasonable path to citizenship for non-citizens.

5: Coates said the Commissioners, CCEMS leadership, Finance Director Trombly, and himself will be in Winchester at 5:00pm on August 11 to discuss EMS services.

6: Coates said there will be a Department Heads meeting on Thursday July 17 to discuss the budget process for 2026.

7: Coates said the capital improvement plan is taking a different direction. Coates said that we will be continuing forward with the plan. The CIP plan will consist of Sheryl Trombly, Misty Hall, Linda Donnelly, Aaron Newman, Amanda Bassett, Davis Bernstein, and himself.

Coates said that the team will try to get this done so it is useful for the budget process.

8: Coates said meetings with the CCEMS back up towns will begin soon.

9: Bernstein said the team will hopefully be meeting with Richmond on August 11 at 6:00pm.

10: Coates said Grants Manager Bansley, Executive Director of MEDC Morrison and himself are discussing going after a grant to develop multi-unit housing through HUD.

Commissioner Clark said the housing inventory in Keene is very old, so this program sounds promising.

III. Old Business

IV. New Business

1: Finance Director Trombly said she has had a contract with our auditors (Vachon Clukay & Company) for three years. It is up for renewal. She would prefer not to look for a different auditor as there are not many local options, and transitioning to a new one would be unnecessary work and confusion. She is asking for the Commissioners permission to allow her to seek a quote from the current auditors to hopefully continue forward with the same group rather than go out for bid.

The Commissioners supported this decision.

V. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of July 9, 2025

Commissioner Clark made a motion to approve the manifest and minutes of July 9, 2025. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion. 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:

IX. Adjournment

At 10:18AM Commissioner DiBernardo 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