



COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday, December 20, 2023

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

County Hall Building
Commissioners 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 and Terry Clark. Commissioner Englund absent with notice.

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Director of Human Resources May, Superintendent Iouse, Drug Court Coordinator Welsh, Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein.

Guest(s): Executive Director of Arts Alive Jessica Gelter.

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 8:31AM the Commissioners opened the meeting, and Commissioners Wozmak and Clark responded as present.

County Administrator Chris Coates asked for any public comments, seeing none he moved forward with the first scheduled agenda item.

I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

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

Finance Director Trombly asked that the Commissioners approve an additional rollover item for the budget in the amount of \$66,479.84 to perform repairs in the County Attorney's office.

Commissioner Clark moved to approve the \$66,479.84 in rollovers and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item: 1144 – Semi-Annual Report, Behavioral Health Court – A. Welsh
Action Expected: To receive a report on the previous six months of operations of the Behavioral Health Court.

Behavioral Health Court Coordinator (BHC) Welsh began her report by stating that she would like to get a database up and running for mental health court. Though according to Welsh, this may not make sense as there may be one set up by the state in the next year or two.

Welsh said that their programs accept everyone, with no discrimination by race, sex, gender, background, or any unique identifiers.

For those in BHC, PTSD is the most frequent diagnosis, major depressive disorder, ADD, and bipolar disorder are frequent diagnoses as well.

Sadly 37% of the BHC population is homeless. Superintendent Iouse says that the local motels are being used as long-term housing for people on disability and social security.

Welsh said the largest group of the BHC population has Medicaid, with some on Medicare.

Welsh clarified that mandated treatment is done through the drug court, not behavioral health court.

Master Agenda Item: 1146 – Arts Alive Discussion - J. Gelter

Action Expected: To discuss arts initiatives throughout the County and region.

Executive Director of Arts Alive Jessica Gelter began her presentation by explaining what Arts Alive does. She said Arts Alive works to enhance the culture of the region by supporting our communities and supporting arts initiatives within city/town master plans. The goal is to ignite creativity and spark imagination.

Gelter said that arts create significant economic activity, but it is also an outlet for healing and the creation of a strong community.

Gelter showed the Commissioners the Arts and Economic Prosperity Study, conducted by Americans for the Arts. In the Monadnock region, the arts supply 521 full-time jobs, and bring in 25 million dollars into the region.

Gelter said Arts Alive has mini grants of \$250 or less to support artists in making or sharing their work, this can be especially helpful to those who make a living through the arts.

Elevate, the arts festival, started two years ago, and promotes/support the idea that anyone can make art regardless of training, methods, or age.

County Administrator Coates said we have some of or the best arts in the state, and we should do what we can to promote them. Coates said the grants workshop program through the County can be vital towards supporting the local arts.

Master Agenda Item: 1145 – Semi-Annual Reporting Frequency Discussion – C. Coates & D. Bernstein

Action Expected: To discuss, assess, and approve the frequency of semi-annual reporting by departments.

County Administrator Coates began by asking the Commissioner's if they would like to alter the frequency of the County's semi-annual reporting schedule for departments, due to the overlap with budget hearings in the Fall.

Commissioner Wozmak stated that he was comfortable with the frequency of the reporting schedule, and Commissioner Clark agreed.

No changes were made to the semi-annual reporting schedule.

III. County Administrator

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

County Administrator Coates began his report by stating that both the Interim Chief of Cheshire EMS, and the Keene Fire Chief have been meeting to ensure all details between the back-up agreement with the County and Keene are finalized.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and the meeting minutes of December 13, 2023.

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

Master Agenda Item #673: Commissioners - State Cost Shifting Letter and Restorative Justice Program

IX. Nonpublic Sessions:

X. Adjournment

At 10:45 AM, Commissioner Wozmak 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