



## COMMISSIONERS MEETING

### Minutes

Wednesday, March 6, 2024

This meeting will be conducted in person  
and electronically (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 #: 6031233**

**Start Time 08:30 AM**

**Present:** Commissioners Robert Englund and Terry Clark. Commissioner Wozmak absent with notice.

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director May, Superintendent Iosue, and Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein

**Guest(s):** Jack Ahern - Associate Planner for Southwest Region Planning Commission & Sara Powell – Hannah Grimes Center

### **Public Comments**

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

At 8:32AM the Commissioners opened the meeting, and Commissioners Englund and Clark responded as present in person and Commissioner Wozmak was marked absent with notice.

-County Administrator Coates asked for public comment, seeing none he moved forward with the agenda.

### **I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates**

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

-Superintendent Iosue said that Doug Mason will be retiring as kitchen manager from the DOC. Coates said we will have big shoes to fill, and appreciates Mason's years of service to the County and the DOC.

-HR Director may said Cheshire County EMS has 50 total employees not including the Interim Chief or Deputy Chief(s). Currently Cheshire EMS is fully staffed and is not actively hiring for any positions, though HR will add any applications to a resume bank when any positions open up.

## II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1158: CDBG Microenterprise Public Hearings – J. Ahern, SWRPC

**Action Expected: (1) Conduct mid-grant public hearing for 2023 (SFY24) CDBG Microenterprise program; and (2) Conduct an application public hearing for 2024 (SFY25) CDBG Microenterprise program and vote to approve the submission of the application, the adoption of the Residential Antidisplacement and Relocation Plan, and the designation of authorized officials.**

**Vice-Vice-Chair Englund opened the first public hearing for discussion and public comment on the Community Development Block Grant project at 8:38AM**

Jack Ahern, Associate Planner with SWRPC explained that it is a requirement of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) to hold a public hearing while the project is underway to allow the public the opportunity to comment and ask questions about the project.

Jack Ahern described the project being discussed today as a \$562,540 Microenterprise Development Assistance Grant sub-granted by Cheshire County to Hannah Grimes Center and NH Small Business Development Center to provide technical assistance and support to small businesses around the state of New Hampshire.

Jack Ahern provided the following details on the status of the project:

Hannah Grimes Center received \$346,390 in grant funds and has provided 19 microenterprise businesses with its services in the first two quarters of the project. Of the 19 microentrepreneurs, nine were identified as members of one or more “target population” and two were located in designated “Community Center Areas”. The center has provided four microenterprises with direct assistance grants of \$5,000 each for equipment purchases.

NH Small Business Development Center received \$216,150 in grant funds and has provided 17 microenterprise businesses with its services in the first two quarters of the project.

The Vice-Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects. Seeing none the Vice-Chair closed the public hearing at 8:46AM

**The Vice-Chair opened the second public hearing for discussion and public comment on the Community Development Block Grant extension amendment at 8:47AM.**

Jack Ahern, Associate Planner with SWRPC explained that the NH Community Development Finance Authority has provided Cheshire County the opportunity to request a one-year extension of its current CDBG 2023 Microenterprise Development Assistance Grant Agreement through June 30, 2025, in lieu of a 2024 program year grant application. The extension will make additional funds available in an amount up to the original 2023 program year allocation.

Jack Ahern explained that Hannah Grimes Center will seek an extension and request additional funding equal to their original 2023 allocation of \$346,390. This will increase the total project cost from \$346,390 to \$692,780. They will serve an additional 50 clients for a total of 100 through the extended grant period. NH Small Business Development Center will seek an extension and request additional funding in the amount of \$155,375 to serve an additional 25 clients through the extended grant period. This will increase the total project cost to \$371,525. The extension will bring the total amount of grant funds received to \$1,064,305 for the full two-year extended grant period.

The Vice-Chair opened the floor to public comment on the projects, seeing none, he moved forward.

Commissioner Clark motioned to close the Public Hearing on the CDBG Block Grant Amendment. Seconded by Commissioner Englund. *The motion passed unanimously.*

Master Agenda Item #1159: County Solar Power Discussion – A. Kellar & C. Coates  
**Action Expected: To discuss potential options for the County to utilize solar power.**

-County Administrator Coates said the County has been examining solar power projects for five years, he then asked Andrew Keller from Solar Garden to present.

-Founder of NH Solar Garden Kellar stated that he has worked in the field of solar for more than 13 years, prior to this he was focused on biodiesel.

Kellar said due to understaffing with the utilities, the current estimate for getting a project up and running for municipal entities is three to four years.

Kellar said that joining an existing project may be a faster turn around than having ownership over solar power.

View the full presentation [HERE](#).

### 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 reporting by praising HR Director May for her work with a grievance filed with the state labor board.

Finance Director Trombly said the grievance was related to an established County policy.

May said that an employee quit with no notice, stating he would not be returning to work the following day. A grievance was filed with the Department of Labor. May said like most employers the County does not pay out sick time. When an employee does not give proper notice vacation time is not paid out either. The Labor Board agreed that these policies are just, and ruled in the County's favor.

-Coates brought up the previously tabled motion of 100 Nights funding after the Commissioners request more information.

Executive Director of 100 Nights Cambiar told Coates that the City of Keene does allow people to stay in the 100 Nights resource room as long as it is not utilized for sleeping.

100 Nights is requesting \$12,096 to staff the resource room overnight.

**Commissioner Clark made a motion to approve the allocation of funds to 100 Nights. Commissioner Englund seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. Old Business**

**V. New Business**

**VI. Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of February 28, 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 11:15 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