

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday May 9, 2018 09:30AM
County Hall
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners Peter Graves and Joseph Cartwright, Charles Weed

Staff: Finance Director Trombly, ACA Compliance Assistant M. Des Chenes, DOC Case Manager Doug Iosue, DOC Director of Training Major Tim Knowles, DOC Federal Liaison Officer Captain Scott McLaughlin, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guests:

At 9:30AM the Chairman opened the meeting and recognized Des Chenes who described the upcoming Employee Health Fair and reviewed some of the booth services that will be available. She then said that the County has been recognized by Healthy Monadnock and awarded “badges” for 5 health areas, Tobacco Free, Physically Active, Well Nourished, Family Friendly, and Building Resilience.

Doug Iosue was then recognized and discussed the impact of the Medicaid program on inmates. He handed out a document entitled “How and When Medicaid Covers People Under Correctional Supervision”. He spoke to the content of the handout and said that \$16,300.00 and below is the qualifying income to be placed on the program. He said that under current rules Medicaid coverage is suspended when a covered person is incarcerated.

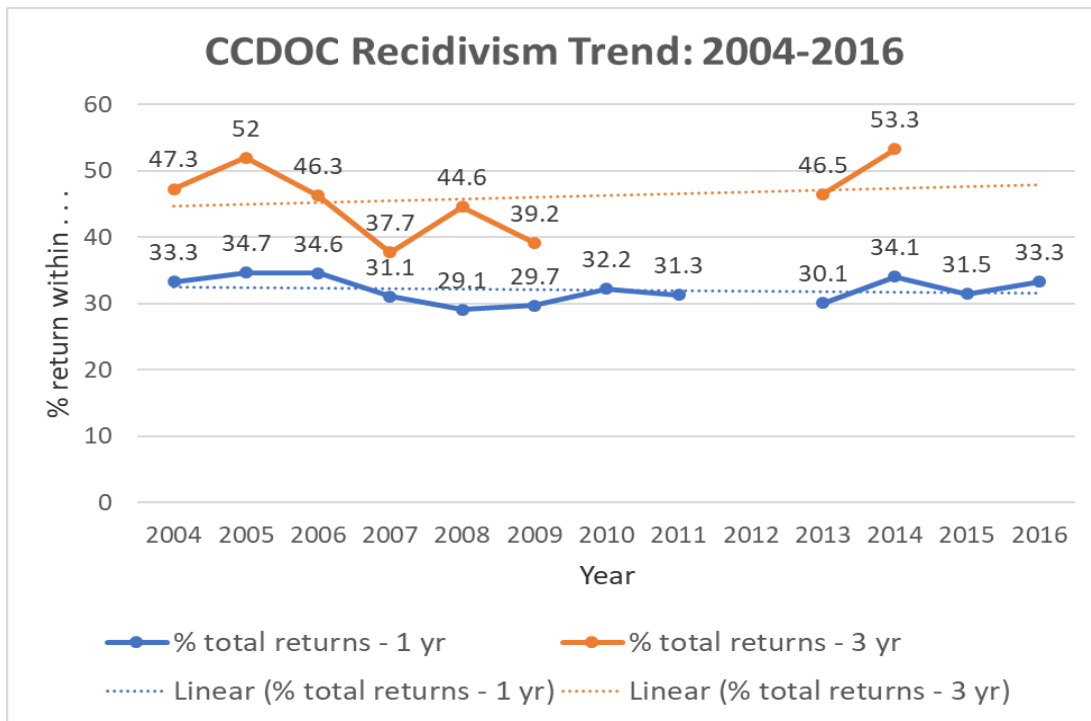
He said that he normally reviews and screens inmates as they are scheduled for release to help them be re-instated to the Medicaid program. He then said that he coordinates with many of the local health service providers to ensure that referrals will be taken by the providers when notified by the DOC staff.

He said that in 2009 64% of the inmate population did not have insurance. In 2014 the uninsured rate was 63%. In 2015 and 2016 it was 39%, and in 2017 the rate fell to 12% and again in 2018 the rate fell further to 7%.

He then said that 44% of the inmates that were released were unemployed last year. A discussion of the medical care provided to inmates was reviewed and the cost of services while inmates are in facility was discussed.

The DOC recidivism trend rates were then reviewed for the years 2004 through 2016. He said that the rates are within other trend data from state prisons and other facilities.

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Trombly was then recognized and discussed a meeting with the County Attorney concerning reinstatement into the NH Retirement system that is being mandated by the State.

She then discussed the ways that donations made at the nursing home are tracked and accounted for internally. She provided a handout that shows the accounts and discussed the procedures in place to ensure that donor requests are honored and tracked.

Bouchard was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report and he provided the following information.

Bouchard said that an Attorney that is representing NH Counties in an opiate class action lawsuit will be attending next week Commissioners meeting to provide details and to ascertain if Cheshire County is interested in joining the suit as a plaintiff.

He then reminded the Commissioners that next week is also Nursing Week and an employee lunch is being served and that the Commissioners have volunteered to serve the food for the three shifts. The lunch is scheduled for 12:00PM.

Bouchard then said that the Ground-Breaking ceremony for Maplewood will be held on May 21st at 1:30PM and that the invitations have been sent out.

He then said that the quote received from a bidder for the Old Courthouse window project appears to be within budget but needs to be further examined and a second option still needs to be priced. It is hoped that the update quote will be received this week.

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Bouchard then said that as a follow-up to a question from last week's Commissioners Meeting that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the County and University of New Hampshire for the operation of the Cooperative Extension Program is renewed every five (5) years. Trombly added that the Coop Extension Manager, Steve Roberge is completing a memo on that reiterates the existing financial obligations of both parties that is not expected to change from the current MOU.

Master Agenda Item #582: Department of Corrections Semi-Annual report was then taken-up for discussion.

DOC Director of Training Major Tim Knowles then joined the meeting and discussed personnel retention and training. Knowles said that the turnover rate has improved significantly over the last year and has dropped from about 25% to 15%. He stated that it is difficult to find qualified staff who can pass the necessary background checks. He said that he believes that the change to in-house certification that took place last year has had a positive effect on the overall retention.

He made a point that over 3,700 hours of training last year that has resulted in a very low number of lawsuits and legal issues being filed.

He went on to say that eight CO's who graduated from the in-house academy last year instead of attending the NHAC classes ended up saving about \$40K in costs including travel and overtime.

He discussed the training that Cheshire County offers vs. other Counties and said that recently personnel from Cheshire trained all the CO's of another County in CPR.

DOC Federal Liaison Officer Captain Scott McLaughlin was then recognized and discussed that the Federal Inmate population is averaging around 60 and that the number of transports has risen significantly.

He then said that the new van has worked out very well and the CO's are very pleased to have the use of the vehicle.

The Weekly Census was reviewed.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed with questions from Cartwright. At the conclusion of the questions, Commissioner Cartwright moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The minutes of April 25, 2018 were then reviewed and Commissioner Weed moved to accept the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Cartwright. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

The Calendar was then reviewed and time change that is needed was noted.

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Old Business

No old business issues

New Business

No new business issues

At 11:23AM The Commissioners adjourned to conduct the first (1st) 2018 semi-annual jail inspection as required by NH RSA 30-B: 12 and to report the findings to the Director of Administration of the New Hampshire Department of Justice.

At 11:25AM the Commissioners entered the Booking area and spoke with the Correctional Officers (C. O.'s) on duty. They reviewed the cells and booking area and then exited the booking room.

At 11:33AM The Commissioners entered the female holding pod, F Block. Commissioners Cartwright and Weed spoke with the inmates and Commissioner Graves spoke with Capt. McLaughlin about facility staffing issues.

At 11:37AM The Clinic was entered and the Commissioners spoke with the Medical Services Coordinator. It was discussed that the overall acuity level of the inmates is rising and they are experiencing more hospital visits and longer stays. The reasons are varied and many for the increase in acuity but the primary driver is the large increase in inmates who use drugs, specifically heroin and fentanyl, which in turns causes a lack of self-personal care and an increase in acuity levels of health issues.

At 11:41AM R (Receiving and Classification) and S (Segregation) Blocks were then visited and the Commissioners reviewed the operations of the blocks with staff and discussed the interactions between the CO's and the inmates.

At 11:50AM the Laundry area was quickly reviewed however no staff were on duty.

At 11:53AM the Commissioners entered the Kitchen and spoke with the head cook on duty concerning meals and kitchen equipment.

At 11:57AM D Block was entered and the Commissioners spoke with a number of inmates. A conversation concerning the use of the recreation space for each Pod occurred and the security reasons for not having an outside fence yard were covered.

At 12:08AM the Maintenance department was visited and the use of the steam equipment was discussed. The outside maintenance contracts for equipment was covered and the Geo-thermal system monitoring system that is being installed was discussed.

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The Commissioners then entered one of the facility conference rooms for the purpose of interviewing inmates and staff.

At 12:23PM the first inmate entered the room and discussed their experience with the facility saying that they are very pleased with their treatment and the physical conditions that they are living in are much better than the State prison where they were transferred from. They said that the treatment by the CO's was "fantastic". They said that the statement should be taken as high praise as they have a pending lawsuit against the State for poor care / treatment at the State Prison and it is one of the reasons that they were transferred to the Cheshire facility.

They said that it has been recommended by the Prison that they take the Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) training available at Cheshire. (MRT is a systematic treatment strategy that seeks to decrease recidivism among juvenile and adult criminal offenders by increasing moral reasoning).

The first inmate exited the room and the second inmate entered shortly thereafter.

The inmate said that they are a Federal inmate and they have been in numerous jails and prisons over the years and that Cheshire is the nicest and cleanest facility that they have been in and the food is quite good.

The Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning any things that could be changed or improved. They said that the only thing they would like to change is when being escorted to the clinic a CO has to stay in the exam room with them while they speak with the medical personnel. They don't want the CO's present when discussing their medical issues.

They said that they were arrested and charged with identity theft and that they are guilty. A plea deal is being worked but they expect to be in the facility for at least 18 to 24 months before their actual sentencing. They said that in their opinion the facility is doing a "great job".

The inmate was then escorted from the interview room.

At 12:40PM the first CO entered the interview room and was introduced to the Commissioners. They said that they have been working at the facility for about 2 years and that they love the work and how the facility is run. They said that this is the first job that they have had where they feel that someone "has their back" and is happy with their situation and with their colleagues and the facility.

At 12:47PM the second CO met with the Commissioners and said that they have been working at the facility for 3 years and have enjoyed the work. They said in response to a question from the Commissioners that they believed that the overall staff turnover has dropped in the last year and in their opinion the union that was formed last year has had a positive effect.

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They discussed the shift work that they experienced when they first came to the job and talked about how much they liked being attached to 1st shift on a permanent basis. The CO then exited the interview room.

At 12:58 PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was then seconded by Commissioner Cartwright and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Charles Weed
Clerk, Board of Commissioners