

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday April 10, 2019 08:30AM
Department of Corrections
850 Marlboro Road
Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners, Charles (Chuck) Weed, John (Jack) Wozmak and Robert (Bob) Englund

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Superintendent Van Wickler, and HR Director May.

Guest(s): Tom Giancola, Congresswoman Kusters Office, Ryan Gagne Live Free Structures Sober Living and Keith Thibault, Southwestern Community Services.

At 8:41AM Vice-Chairman Wozmak opened the meeting and approved the minutes of April 3rd. He then asked if there were any questions on the census, manifest, calendar. There being no questions they were accepted by unanimous vote.

Commissioner Weed then joined the meeting at 8:45AM

HR Director May was then recognized by the Chair and she updated the Commissioners on the status of the Human Resource (HR) Generalist position that is currently vacant as the incumbent is on a Leave of Absence (LOA). May said that there is an individual doing an internship in Nursing Home Administrative training with the Nursing Home Administrator K. Kindopp. He will also be hired as a part-time staff member assigned to work in the Human Resources Department to help support the HR Director base on his previous work experience.

Master Agenda Item # 666 - Chairman Weed then recognized Tom Giancola from Congresswoman Kusters office. Giancola informed the Commissioners that the Energy and Commerce Committee that the Congresswoman sits on has a focus on renewable energy and healthcare.

He said that the FCC is investigating the broadband mapping process and are specifically investigating the mapping coverage for 4G LTE provided by the carriers.

Coates talked about our participation in mapping the Cheshire County region and said that as a result of the study the FCC found there was a discrepancy with the reporting from the providers as compared to the on-ground mapping results that was conducted by the regional towns.

Commissioner Weed provided Giancola with some information from the National Association of Counties (NACO) regarding an effort called "Test It" that seems to be a similar endeavor. Giancola said that the Congresswoman supports any funding that will come into the region for this purpose and that she would be please to write a letter of support for grants the county may be seeking for these purposes.

Giancola then asked if there are any other priorities that their office should be looking into.

Commissioner Wozmak said that Economic Development and housing for those struggling with substance abuse issues and lifting the ban on the loss of Medicaid for individuals incarcerated were important to the County.

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In addition to the federal government pushing the costs down to the County and the local governments, it is also a burden on the local Mental Health agencies and health care providers to provide treatment once the individual is released as there is a gap in insurance coverage when they are released but are in need of services. Coates asked if their office is aware of any grants out there that would help to support renovation of old buildings to please make us aware.

The Commissioners thanked Giancola for his attendance at the meeting and will remain in communication with the Congresswoman's office.

Master Agenda Item #667: Live Free Structures Sober Living (Second Chance Housing) Restorative Justice Program - Status of Program in County was then taken-up for discussion and Keith Thibault Southwestern Community Services was recognized and introduced Ryan Gagne, Executive Director of Live Free Structures Sober Living.

Gagne spoke about the programs that were designed to provide extended care sober living for men. He personally was in sober living and was supported with this treatment approximately nine years ago. He said that when he was in treatment there were a number of services available to help him that are now not available to those in real need.

Gagne said that he feels there are ways to create affordable sober living situations. He cited that 64% of the people that came into the program in 2016 are sober today. When he saw that the Second Chance for Success building become available, he thought this could be a good fit to establish a sober living facility in Cheshire County.

He explained that the typical costs for a person to enter a support facility are approximately \$900.00 month but for this building he has been able to get the cost down to a more reasonable \$750.00 month. The facility will offer Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) accessibility with the goal to match the program participant with employment in the local community. He explained that there is a community culture that the staff and residents help to transport one another and there are also 7 bicycles available for use by residents.

He then explained that a lab has been set-up on-site to help monitor drug testing. The entry fee has been set at \$375.00 then \$185.00/per week and the residents sign program agreements not lease agreements as they need to comply with the program in order to continue living in the facility.

He said that the residents that will come to this facility are from this region and that even though Medicaid will not pay for housing it will pay for some of the ancillary provider services.

Thibault suggested that there is a possibility to reach out to Keene Housing to see if there is any support that could be made to supplement any of the daily rate for living in the housing for those that might qualify.

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Discussion ensued around employment recovery friendly workplace and that they have been successful as the community has been supportive. He said that certain companies have been willing to give the residents a chance due to their overwhelming labor needs and that they have taken on several residents that have shown a good work ethic and this is opening the door to take on more residents.

Wozmak asked about any concerns regarding the financing that built the structure. Thibault indicated that everyone that is living there meets the original requirements for the funding that built the structure.

Thibault mentioned that they are pleased that they have been able to repurpose this building with this program and how this program will be useful and is needed for our region.

A question was asked of Giancola concerning the potential use of a grant program to pay individuals going through internships to become a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselors (LADC's). It was discussed that the long unpaid internship was a large impediment for many students studying for certification and licensure.

Commissioner Englund asked how long they have been open and how many residents have left since the program opened. Ryan said that the program began on January 15th thus far they have discharged 2 people successfully and had to let 2 people go out of the program. He said that the average length of stay will be approximately 6 months to 1 year and that they will have 3 staff members with one staff being paid and two living in the facility in exchange for the cost of their rent. The 2 staff that are not paid but live free rent act as mentors to those living there.

The Commissioners thanked Gagne and Thibault for their presentation and wished Ryan success with the program.

Due to time constraints it was decided that Master Agenda Item #668 for the Restorative Justice presentation will be scheduled to be taken-up at the April 24th meeting, and Master Agenda Item #669 for the semi-annual report for the Department of Corrections (DOC) would be rescheduled for a later time.

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that we are applying for a grant from the Norther Borders Regional Commission to hire a project manager or firm to meet with area businesses and with business training facilities such the Hanna Grimes Center in Keene to gather data to discover the needs and priorities of our local businesses.

The 100% cost could be upward of \$120,000.00 so our match could be \$60,000.00 in cash or in-kind. He said that the Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) has said they will match \$50,000.00. The grant if received would start in the fall of 2019 and Coates said that

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he will place the issue on the Delegation meeting agenda in August meeting to consider a County appropriation to continue funding for the position.

Weed asked if this was a way to resurrect the Economic Development Coordination position that was proposed for the 2019 budget. Coates said that he sees this as a way to gather information with the grant funds in order to be able to go back to the Delegation to show that the position is needed and justified based on the gathered facts and requests from the business community that is served by the County and towns.

Coates then said that he was on a call with Attorney Robert Bonsignore last Friday and that Bonsignore stated that in the recent Oklahoma opiate ruling the judge ordered \$280M to be paid to the state of Oklahoma. Bonsignore feels we should look at this at the starting point for New Hampshire.

Coates discussed that he has reached out to a Todd Bassler who would like to purchase land we own in Chesterfield. Coates will set-up a meeting to understand his request in greater detail and to explain the process by which how the County may go about selling land. Commissioner Wozmak mentioned that we should set aside about \$6,000.00 in the 2020 budget in order to survey the land.

Coates then informed the Commissioners about a meeting he had with Administrator Kindopp and her leadership team, the Director of Finance and the Director Human Resources to discuss the census at the nursing home. After thoughtful conversation it was resolved that the first goal is to get the census to 125 by May and 130 by July. The team will meet again in May to continue discussions.

Coates informed the commissioners about a conversation he had with the Monadnock Humane Society Executive Director, Kathy Collingsworth, about a bill that she feels the County should pay regarding the dogs that were taken into custody as a result of an investigation by the Sheriff's department last year. Collingsworth will be sending a more detailed breakdown for review however, Commissioner Wozmak does not feel that the County is responsible for any of the costs despite the Sheriff being the arresting agency.

The Commissioners will meet next Wednesday at Primex after the Governor's Council breakfast meeting. There will be a limited agenda and the meeting will be noticed that the meeting will be held in Concord at the Primex Building.

Superintendent Van Wickler then joined the meeting. Van Wickler informed them he met with the medical dispensary, Keene Metro, last week and that he will be meeting again this week along with Administrator Coates about establishing a methadone distribution center in the Department of Corrections medical department. This will not have a cost to the county as Keene Metro will cover all costs and send a medical staff for this purpose that will work out of the

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Medical Department. Discussion ensued about current pending legislation regarding second medical opinions for inmates.

Old Business: None

New Business: Commissioner Weed mentioned that Administrator Kindopp was ranked in the top 7% leadership for nursing homes in county and was again awarded the Eli Peck facility award.

General Discussion: None

At 12:30PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Englund, Clerk