

MINUTES  
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting  
Wednesday, May 22, 2019  
Department of Corrections  
825 Marlboro Road  
Keene, NH 03431

**Present:** Commissioners: Charles Weed, and Robert Englund (John Wozmak – absent with notice)

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Safety Officer Kroupa, HR Director May, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

**Guest(s):** Eversource Staff Conner Jennings, Jennifer Ducharme, Mark Frazier and Steven Casey. Jack Dugan, Monadnock Economic Development Corporation (MEDC)

At 8:30AM The Chairman opened the meeting and recognized Conner Jennings, Jennifer Ducharme, Mark Frazier and Steven Casey of Eversource Utilities to discuss Master Agenda Item #681: Eversource - Battery Storage Project – Westmoreland Campus

Casey introduced the Eversource staff and began an overview of the proposed project and said that the media had multiple reports of the project released yesterday.

The report from the New Hampshire Public Radio (NHPR.com) website follows and the link to article can be found here: <https://www.nhpr.org/post/eversource-plans-7m-battery-storage-demonstration-project-westmoreland>

### ***Storage Demonstration Project In Westmoreland***

*By Annie Ropeik • May 21, 2019*

*Credit courtesy Eversource*

*Eversource wants to bring battery storage and other new energy technology to a small, rural town in western New Hampshire.*

*The utility's clean energy strategy director, Charlotte Ancel, says the town of Westmoreland experiences some of the longest, most frequent power outages of any town in the utility's New Hampshire service area.*

*Ancel says this is because Westmoreland relies on one power line with no backups, and it's vulnerable to falling tree branches in storms the utility expects to increase with climate change.*

*"So, we view the need to provide safe, reliable, cost-effective power to our customers as being an urgent and non-negotiable need," she says.*

*But Ancel says building another power line to address the problem would cost \$6 million.*

*Instead, Eversource wants to build a battery, for \$7 million – with an estimated long-term savings of \$2 million for all the company's New Hampshire customers.*

*Ancel says the project aims to reduce costs, improve reliability and lower carbon emissions for customers in Westmoreland and across the state.*

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*The battery will serve as a back-up generator for the town, able to provide power for up to four hours if their main power line has an outage.*

*The average power outage in Westmoreland right now lasts two and a half hours. Eversource's average outages elsewhere are under two hours long.*

*The town has also experienced 20 outages in the past five years – an average of one every three months. The average Eversource town experiences an outage roughly every 13 months, according to a spokesman.*

*Ancel says the battery will also store up power when prices are low – then use that power to cut costs and emission at times of peak demand, like on very cold or hot days.*

*The demonstration project is part of the utility's plans for a more modern energy grid.*

*"We'd like to use this project to test and refine that vision and to also bring in other partners," Ancel says.*

*In Westmoreland, that'll include energy efficiency upgrades for residents – as well as incentives for those who give Eversource access to their in-home batteries, electric vehicle chargers and smart thermostats.*

*With that "bring your own device" program, Ancel says the utility will be able to turn down those devices just slightly a couple times a month to offset energy demand during high-price periods.*

*The utility hopes to include the project in a rate hike that's already in the works with state regulators. Construction would begin next year.*

Many aspects of the project were discussed and the Commissioners and staff asked a number of questions pertaining to the installation and the potential benefits. The Eversource staff discussed the reasons for choosing the site in Westmoreland (see above NHPR article) and discussed the positive impact that the implementation of the project can have for the Nursing Home and the anticipated decreased transport costs of power to the site that will lower overall electrical costs.

A PowerPoint presentation was provided that provides further details of the project and can be found on the County website here: [https://www.co.cheshire.nh.us/new\\_and\\_alerts/eversource-westmoreland-clean-innovation-project-battery-storage-micro-grid/](https://www.co.cheshire.nh.us/new_and_alerts/eversource-westmoreland-clean-innovation-project-battery-storage-micro-grid/)

County Administrator Coates in a communication with the PUC on behalf of the Board of Commissioners stated the following:

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*Cheshire County is excited to partner with and to support Eversource's Westmoreland Clean Innovation Project, a cutting-edge clean energy solution that will enhance reliability for customers in Cheshire County and provide an opportunity to further study the development of future clean energy proposals in the Granite State. For the past several years, Westmoreland has experienced a significant number of power outages which affects Westmoreland residents and businesses, as well as critical resources including the Maplewood Country Nursing Home, the Westmoreland Fire Station and the town's elementary school.*

*We have been in close communication with Eversource representatives about their proposed project and understand it will serve as a learning opportunity for them to refine their approach as they consider expanding these types of clean energy applications in other New Hampshire communities. Advancing clean energy is very important to our residents, and we are eager to partner with Eversource and host this groundbreaking effort.*

*In addition to providing a solution to enhance the reliability of electric service in our region, we appreciate that this project will help our residents access energy efficiency upgrades and provide incentives for residents who participate in programs that help reduce the state's energy use. Importantly, we are also pleased that this project provides an alternative to building a new overhead power line in Westmoreland.*

*We are proud to support efforts to build the clean energy grid of the future, and we look forward to continuing to work closely with Eversource to advance this innovative project.*

The Commissioners thanked the Eversource staff for attending the meeting and said that they looked forward to seeing the project begin next year.

At 9:31AM Master Agenda Item #683: CDBG Grants Request was taken-up for discussion. Dugan began to review and discuss possible County support and sponsorship for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant of \$300,000.00 for Compass Innovative Behavior Strategies.

Dugan said that the Finance Director at MEDC has reviewed the financials of the company feels very comfortable with the stability of the firm. A public hearing is being requested for two weeks from this meeting to begin the grant request and funding process.

Dan Dube, president of Compass, spoke of the founding of the company as a company that provides services to individuals with autism. He spoke of the explosive growth of the company over the past few years and discussed the limitations of the company working out of the Hanna Grimes center. He discussed that a very suitable building has been identified on Krif Court in Keene and the unit will be built out as a clinical center and a school.

A lengthy discussion of the required resources to submit and administer the grant began and Dugan said that the public hearing needs to be scheduled for June 5<sup>th</sup> to meet the initial requirements of the NH Community Development Financial Authority (CDFA) who administers the CDBG process.

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Coates then reviewed the current public meeting process and spoke to the scripted nature of the public hearing. Dugan also spoke to the great number of CDBG grants that he has dealt with over the years and will produce the necessary public notices that will be posted tomorrow in order to meet the deadlines of the posting requirements of the CDFA rules.

**Following discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the holding of a public meeting on June 5th to begin the CDBG grant process for the Compass grant. Commissioner Weed seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #682: Safety Officer - Semi-Annual Report and Policy Updates was then taken-up for discussion.

Kroupa presented the following information to the Commissioners and discussed various elements of the reports.

*RE: Semi-Annual Report to the Commissioner*

*Listed below is a summary of the current and on-going projects for the 4th quarter of 2018 and 1st quarter of 2019.*

*Continue to train employees on the new Disaster Plan along with on-going testing of the plan, including updating policies as needed. Changes are distributed quarterly.*

*Fire drills were held in accordance with state and local regulations.*

*The First Disaster "Drill" of 2019 was an actual event based around the partial evacuation of Cheshire Medical Center.*

*The Second 2019 disaster drill is currently being planned.*

*Completed all emergency equipment inspections and replaced items as needed.*

*Completed the 2019 Primex schedule of exposures and makes changes as they occur.*

*Continues to maintain an active role in the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network and the Granite State Health Care Coalition, and will be pursuing membership in the Regional Planning Committee and the Healthcare Workforce Group.*

*Ensure all the Transportation department and drivers who transport residents driving record and/or defensive driving certificates are current.*

*Developed the agendas, created and distributed all the meeting minutes for both the MNH Complex Safety Committee and the Cheshire County Joint Loss Management Committee. The Cheshire County*

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*JLMC is also responsible for inspecting all County-owned facilities, generating an inspection report and submitting the results to the responsible departments.*

*The Workers Compensation and the Temporary Alternative Duty program, managed by the Safety Officer, are current on the compensation process and are in compliance.*

*Working closely with our insurance company, Primex, benchmarks are set every year to assist in areas that need strengthening.*

*Wrote 3 county-wide policies that are waiting on approval- HAZCOM, Worker's Compensation and Lockout/Tagout. More to come.*

*Work with Primex to meet employee's ergonomic needs with the review of workstations, adding ergonomic devices and space planning with occasional furniture purchasing.*

*Will be organizing fire extinguisher training for Maplewood and Keene Campuses, with all County employees invited.*

*Member of the committee that organizes employee health fairs at MNH and Keene Campus. Kroupa then handed out a packet of Safety Policies extracted from the County manual. The Workers Compensation policy update was discussed and then the cabinet Lockout / Tagout policy was covered. The Hazard Communications policy was then reviewed.*

Kroupa then reviewed and discussed the current Workers Compensation Claims and provided the following overview:

**Workers Comp 2019**  
**As of 5/21/2019**

Currently 0 employees on light duty, 2 employees out of work (one from 2018 injury)  
\*1 employee filed worker's comp, then decided injury wasn't work related- Primex issued denial

<u>11*Claims to Date</u>	<u>Lost work days</u>	<u>Light duty days</u>
7 -Nursing (MNH)	18 from 2019 injuries	65
1 – Keene Facilities		
1 – Env Svc		
2 – Dietary (MNH)		
<b>Gender:</b>	<b>Shift:</b>	
3 - Male	7-3: 4	
8- Female	3-11: 6	
	11-7: 1	

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**Day of Week:**

0 - Sunday  
2 - Monday  
2 – Tuesday

2 – Wednesday  
4- Thursday  
1 - Friday  
0 – Saturday

She said that the overall claims are down from last year and that we are trending “in the green” with our insurance carrier, Primex.

The Commissioners thanked Kroupa for her report and then then recognized the County Administrator for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that the state health department will hold a public information meeting next week about a proposed medical marijuana dispensary in Keene. The forum, scheduled for Wednesday, May 29, at 6 p.m., will be in the Blastos Room of Keene Ice at 380 Marlboro St.

Coates then said that Arts Alive held a event last weekend and Mike Moses the County Facilities Supervisor was praised for his work on making the event a success.

Coates then said that on Friday May 31<sup>st</sup> at noon a retirement party will be held for Michael Potter’s retirement and the Commissioners are invited to attend.

He then said that a meeting with community members who will be involved in the cupola restoration was held this week. Coates described the areas of the building that will be addressed including the painting of the windows, rebuilding of the eaves and gutters, the repair of the of the roof, and the restoration of the cupola itself.

The funding of the Integrated Delivery Network’s (IDN’s) was then covered and Coates asked Commissioner Weed as in his role as vice-chair of the New Hampshire Association of Counties, how he thought the other Counties will proceed with funding for the coming year. A discussion began around the other Counties programs and the state goal of raising is approximately \$10M for all Counties combined was covered. The discussion continued concerning what is happening in other Counties with IDN’s and the possible effect on the Region 1 IDN that Cheshire County is part of was reviewed.

Coates then asked Commissioner Englund about the Kuster visit on June 17<sup>th</sup> and Commissioner Englund said that the meeting is still scheduled however, the time for the meeting may be pushed back to 2:00PM instead of 11:00AM as originally discussed. If the 2:00PM time holds then the additional trip to the nursing home in Westmoreland will not take place.

**At 11:14AM Commissioner Weed moved to enter a non-meeting to discuss a union matter. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed with two (2) Yea’s.**

**At 11:24AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.**

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**At 11:25AM Commissioner Weed moved to enter a non-public session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(e) Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed against this board or any subdivision thereof, or against any member thereof because of his or her membership therein, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled.**

**As a result of deliberations in non-public no decisions were made and no vote was taken.**

**At 11:23AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to public session.**

**At 11:30AM Commissioner Weed pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) moved to enter non-public session to discuss matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Englund and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**As a result of deliberations in non-public session the Commissioners voted unanimously to approve an unpaid leave of absence for D. M. for eight (8) weeks.**

**At 11:36AM the Commissioners voted unanimously to re-enter public session.**

**Coates then addressed an HR request for an FMLA extension for a staff member and the pp from the HR Department was to extend the FMLA as requested. Following a short discussion, the Commissioners voted unanimously to authorize the extension for the FMLA for MW for an additional eight (8) weeks.**

Old Business: None

New Business: Trombly discussed the receipt of the final Auditors report and reviewed a change in procedures to report out to the Commissioners a more detailed view of some sections of manifest payments.

The Weekly Census was then reviewed and the report was accepted as informational. A discussion concerning staffing and open positions was covered.

The Weekly Manifest was then reviewed, and **Commissioner Englund moved to accept the Manifest as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Englund, upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

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**The minutes of May 08, 2019 were then reviewed and Commissioner Englund moved to accept the minutes as amended and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

The calendar was then reviewed.

**General Discussion for Commissioners:**

Master Agenda Item #673: Commissioners - State Cost Shifting Letter. The Commissioners discussed an additional amendment to the letter and a draft of the language will be forth coming.

**At 12:00PM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Weed moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Englund and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Englund, Clerk