

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, October 09, 2019
County Hall Building
Stillman Rogers Conference Room
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

Present: Commissioners: Charles Weed, John Wozmak and Robert Englund

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Director of Finance Trombly, IT Director Hummel, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guest(s):

At 8:30AM Commissioner Weed opened the meeting and recognized Robert Swain a recently retired County employee, who said that he had sent a letter to the Administrator asking for clarification on the County Policy of not paying for accumulated sick time upon termination of employment. Coates spoke to the issue and said that Director Trombly would review the persons cited in Swain's previously submitted letter. Trombly said that despite assertions that there have been employees who have received sick time payouts when they left County employment, she stated categorically that no employee who has retired or has been terminated has received any compensation from accumulated sick time.

Commissioner Wozmak then explained that during his previous role as County Administrator for seventeen years, the sick leave policy was already in place and that the accumulation of large amounts of sick leave hours was to offer employees the equivalent of short-term disability insurance that pays out an employee's full salary for their accumulated time unlike short-term disability that pays approximately 60% of the employee's salary, and that to his knowledge no prior employee had ever received payment for accumulated sick time including himself when retired in 2015.

Following further discussions, Swain said that he was obviously misinformed as to past practices and now understood that no deviation of policy had occurred for other employees.

The Commissioners thanked Swain for attending the meeting for the opportunity to be able to restate the County's policy on sick leave payout which will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

IT Director Hummel was then recognized to address Master Agenda Item #719: Semi-Annual Report - Information Technologies. Hummel said that it is difficult to recruit for his unfilled position because of a lack of competitive salary as compared to local competition or the lack of needed skills of the applicants.

A discussion of the sourcing of potential candidates both locally and regional was covered. Hummel then provided the following written report to the Commissioners and answered questions from the Commissioners:

IT Department Status Report

Staffing & Workload

The IT Department is currently understaffed by one FTE. Record-low unemployment and the normally smaller labor pool in Cheshire County make recruiting challenging. All staff members

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are involved in a full range of activities from routine monitoring and maintenance to active research and development.

Completed Projects

1. Discovery Document File Share (County Attorney)

The County Attorney's office handles large documents as part of receiving and producing discovery materials in electronic format. Currently, this document storage is approximately 1,500 gigabytes. Previously, these files had been stored on a commercial "cloud" storage system with an associated cost.

As a result of a small investment in on-premises storage, the IT Department was able to move these files to local storage. Doing so has increased the speed of accessing these files by more than 10 times as well as eliminating the cost for the third-party service.

2. HVAC Monitoring Services (Maintenance)

The maintenance department contracted ENE Systems of NH to install new boiler and HVAC controllers that require an Internet connection for monitoring and control. Systems were installed at Maplewood and in Keene. To ensure that these systems do not provide a pathway for unauthorized access to County data, we provisioned them with an isolated network and firewall connections.

Current IT Department Projects

1. Telephone System Replacement and Upgrade

The new telephone system design project has moved into the production phase. On September 19, a majority of the telephone lines at 12 Court and 33 West were moved from Consolidated (FairPoint) to a SIP provider. The remaining lines were ported on October 2. The County is now compliant with e911 requirements in Keene.

For the most part, the transition was uneventful. Inadequate wiring at 33 West prevented us from deploying VOIP phones in Deeds. We were able to configure a SIP-to-Analog gateway to allow the existing analog phones to continue to be used until the building is properly wired.

As each campus is upgraded, 4-digit dialing between campuses will become available. The HOC will be the next to be converted. Maplewood will be converted after that on an accelerated schedule due to request by the construction team. The project should be completed by February 2020, when the Consolidated contract expires and has to be renegotiated. Services for the large number of FAX and fire alarm/elevator lines will continue to be provided by Consolidated.

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2. HOC Card Reader System

The HOC Card Reader system controls access within the facility. It is also required for officers to access the Com-Tec security panels. The current system is no longer supported by the manufacturer and replacement parts are difficult to find. The control computer for this system is currently running on an installation of Windows XP that is “air-gapped” to reduce the risk of compromise.

A capital equipment allocation was made to perform an in-place upgrade to this system. We are currently seeking initial bids based on the original construction specifications.

3. Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) Remote Connection System (VPN)

The mobile connections used by the Sheriff Deputies depend on a connection back to the primary data center in Keene over the civilian cell phone network. To ensure that this connection is private, it makes use of a VPN (virtual private network) connection. The unreliability of the cell connection in the terrain common to Cheshire County results in frequent dropped connections.

To improve this situation, we have developed a new VPN system. The new VPN is more robust and is able to recover from temporary disconnections without requiring remote users to repeat the entire login process. In addition, improved security options allow us to more closely restrict access by authorized users. The system has passed final testing and will be deployed to production in the next quarter.

4. Finance Department Kronos Upgrade

Finance is contracted to upgrade its installation of Kronos (time and attendance software) in anticipation of the end-of-support for Flash Player. We are working with Kronos to provide support and resources during the upgrade as well as to ensure continuity and data protection.

Infrastructure

Cheshire County operates a completely virtualized server environment. The advantages of this include more efficient use of resources, reduced maintenance, centralized management, and standardization. In addition, virtualized servers can be backed up, restored, and moved with an ease that is not possible with physical servers.

The fiber-based, high-speed, encrypted connections that link each campus have been performing without issue. Earlier this year, I renegotiated a contract to increase the speed of these connections by 5X at a marginal increase in cost. We continue to advance the design of our independent “management network,” our channel of access to our internal network structure in the event that the primary connections fail.

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Availability, Continuity of Business, and Disaster Survivability Exercise

A primary responsibility of the IT Department is to ensure the availability of computing resources to all County departments when and where required and to ensure the County's continuity of business. We have a comprehensive business continuity program in place which is reviewed, updated, and tested regularly. The program provides for continuation of client services.

On June 28, 2019, someone at Strafford County opened an email message that contained a link. Clicking on the link downloaded ransomware. The program that was activated began to encrypt files on all servers and resulted in the extended shutdown of operations by Strafford. (Fact: The first known small government ransomware incident occurred in Greenland, NH in 2013.)

On October 2, IT held a disaster recovery drill to test its "scorched earth" recovery scenario. In this worst-case scenario, we assumed that every file on every disk on every server in the datacenter – including all backup copies that are normally online, was compromised and unusable. Following our recovery procedure, we were able to "bootstrap" our operation by restoring a first server that was then capable of restoring the other servers from our "air-gapped" tape backups.

In this worst scenario, the bootstrap server was online and ready in under sixty minutes. Basic operations began to be restored approximately thirty minutes after that. Larger installations, such as the complete email server, with its huge store of emails, and larger file shares, were restored in approximately four hours. We are currently working on ways to improve these times and execute multiple restores in parallel.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert L. Hummel
Director of Information Technology

Suzanne Bansley was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #720: Public Health Network SFY20&21 Grant Agreement Amendment.

Bansley explained the reason for the amendment and then asked the Commissioners to vote to accept and sign the grant agreement amendment for the Public Health Network SFY2020 and 2021 federal pass-through grant from the NH Department of Health and Human Services. This grant provides funding to host a regional public health network aligning a range of public health and substance misuse prevention and related health promotion activities. Additionally, it includes funds for implementing a severe weather resilience strategy. These awards will be sub-granted to

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Cheshire Medical Center for program implementation. The amendment includes the budget detail and changes to Exhibit A, Scope of Work.

Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the grant amendment as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Bansley then discussed Master Agenda Item: JAG FFY19 Award Acceptance and asked the Commissioners to vote to accept the JAG FFY19 Award from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Edward Burne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program for \$12,855, of which, \$6,427 will be subawarded to the City of Keene, and execute award documents. Grant term is 10/1/18-9/30/20. No match is required. Funds will be used to continue the cellular connectivity and smartphone data packages.

Commissioner Weed moved to accept the grant amendment as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Trombly was recognized and discussed the following topics.

1. 2019 County Tax apportionment has been received from the State Department of Revenue Administration and Trombly cited the fact that some towns have seen major movement both up and down in their assessed value of the real estate in the last twelve months.
2. New Staff Credit Card Authorization – Trombly asked the Commissioners to authorize the addition of credit card for a department head that was previously not provided with a card. She said that the standard credit limit of \$5,000.00 would apply and that with the addition of the new card she was also requesting the Commissioners to approve an overall increase with the bank that issues the card for the same \$5,000.00 amount.

After discussion, Commissioner Weed moved to authorize the issuance of the card for the employee with a credit limit of \$5,000.00 and to raise the overall limit with the bank for the same amount. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

3. Bond Council engagement letter signature – Trombly then presented the engagement letter for Bond Council work that will be required to move forward with the acquisition of the 33 Winter Street building that is occupied by the State Court system. The Commissioners reviewed the letter and signed the document.

The census was then reviewed and accepted as presented.

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

The minutes of October 2, 2019 were then discussed and Commissioner Englund moved to accept the minutes as presented and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 11:45AM there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting so that the Commissioners could attend the graduation of six new Corrections Officers. The motion to adjourn was seconded by Commissioner Weed and upon vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
R. A. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
R. Englund, Clerk