

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, December 16, 2020
County Hall Pursuant to Emergency Order #12 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04
This meeting will be conducted electronically.

Conference Call Information

Phone Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803

Pin #: 6031233

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

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director K. May, Grants Manager S. Bansley, DOC Superintendent D. Iosue, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Guest(s): County Treasurer, Commissioner Elect, Keene City Counselor Terry Clark, James Weatherly, Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC), Henry Herndon, Clean Energy Coalition NH, Josh Meehan, Executive Director, Keene Housing, Maryann Ferguson Executive Director, Monadnock Collaborative.

At 8:31 AM, Commissioner Weed opened the meeting, and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Commissioners attending the meeting. Commissioners Weed and Englund responded as "present."

Commissioner Wozmak arrived at the meeting at 8:46 AM.

Commissioner Weed then moved to conduct this meeting as an emergency meeting under the relevant provisions of NH RSA 91-A, and consistent with the recommendations contained in Executive Order 2020-04 Order 12 issued by Governor Sununu. Commissioner Wozmak seconded the motion, and upon roll-call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Emergency Order #12 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04

Temporary modification of public access to meetings under RSA 91-A

Pursuant to Section 18 of Executive Order 2020-04, it is hereby ordered, effective immediately, that:

1. Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, paragraph 8 provides: "State and local government bodies are permitted and encouraged to utilize the emergency meeting provisions of RSA 91-A to conduct meetings through electronic means while preserving, to the extent feasible, the public's right to notice of such meetings and ability to observe and listen contemporaneously."
2. Pursuant to Emergency Order #2 issued pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, gatherings of fifty people or more are prohibited.
3. To implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, II 1 (b), that a quorum of a public body be physically present unless immediate action is imperative, is waived for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04.

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4. To further implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, II 1 (c), that each part of a meeting of a public body is audible or otherwise discernible to the public "at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting," is waived for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04 so long as the public body:

- Provides public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by
- video or other electronic means.
- Provides public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.
- Provides a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are
- problems with access; and
- Adjourns the session if the public is unable to access the meeting.

Coates then outlined the rules of the meeting.

1. The public has an opportunity at the beginning of the Commissioners Meeting under "Public Comment" to speak. Community input will not be allowed after that point unless recognized and allowed by the Chair of the Commissioners.
2. All votes will be Roll Call, and when recognized, we are asking that you re-state your name and yes or no
3. If you have a question or motion that you would like to ask to put forward, please state the following, "Mr. Chair, Commissioner (your name) has a question or motion."
4. If you are having issues hearing the call, please text or call the County Administrator at 603-313-9002.
5. Please mute your phones so background noise won't interfere with the meeting.
6. This meeting has been posted on our website so that the Community, department heads, and media can listen to the meeting.
7. This meeting is utilizing a Zoom Platform so listeners can join us via audio or audio/visual.

At 8:33 AM, the Chair opened the meeting and asked for any public comments. He then recognized Terry Clark, who said that he favored joining the program that Henry Herndon of Clean Power NH and Bouchard had been working on for the past year. The program, now called Community Power Coalition of NH, allows towns, cities, and County's to buy and resell electricity for their constituents, often at lower rates than the current default rates from the large utilities, and to supply green and clean electricity options.

A member of the Hundred Nights Board of Directors, Jan Peterson, thanked the County for working with them to allow a bus to park in the County's Latchis parking lot. Executive Director

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Mindy Cambiar also thanked Grants Manager Bansley and James Weatherly of SWRPC for their assistance in preparing for zoning meetings with the City of Keene.

The Commissioners then took-up Master Agenda Item #832: CDBG Hearing - Renovation of 105 Castle Street - \$500,000 for discussion.

At 8:35 AM, Commissioner Weed opened the **First Public Hearing: Community Development Block Grant Application**

Commissioner Weed stated the following; *The Cheshire County Commissioners will hold two consecutive public hearings on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, at 8:30 a.m. Pursuant to Emergency Order #12, issued by the Governor of the State of New Hampshire pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, the public hearings will be conducted electronically via the web-based platform Zoom. Members of the public can use the Zoom call-in number at +1 (646) 558-8656 or by joining online at www.zoom.us/join and using the Meeting ID: 409 748 8803 and Pin: 6031233 to participate.*

The purpose of the first public hearing is to discuss an application to the NH Community Development Finance Authority for federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. CDBG funds are awarded on a competitive basis in New Hampshire and may be used for projects in a wide variety of categories that have a primary benefit to low- and moderate-income individuals. A municipality can apply for up to \$500,000 in CDBG funds per year in each of the following project categories: housing, public facilities, economic development, and microenterprise technical assistance. Municipalities can also apply for up to \$500,000 in emergency funds and \$25,000 for feasibility studies annually.

The proposal to be considered by the Commissioners is a CDBG application to be submitted by Cheshire County on behalf of Keene Housing for \$500,000. The funds, less administrative costs, will be subgranted to the Monadnock Affordable Housing Corporation (MAHC), a 501c3 nonprofit affiliate of Keene Housing. In combination with other sources, the funds will be used for the renovation of 105 Castle Street, which is located in the Harper Acres housing development. The Monadnock Collaborative now occupies the building and serves as a community space for Harper Acres residents. This public hearing has been scheduled to provide specific information regarding the proposal and grant requirements. A second public hearing will be held to adopt the Relocation and Anti-Displacement Plan specific to this project.

Those interested are invited to attend and comment. Please contact the Cheshire County Commissioner's Office, (603) 352-8215 or via Relay NH at 1-800-735-2964 in advance if you have a disability or need assistance in attending or participating in the hearings. Anyone

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wishing to submit written comments prior to the hearings should address them to the Cheshire County Commissioners, 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 or email rbouchard@co.cheshire.nh.us.

Weed then recognized James Weatherly to address the grant request who stated the following.

My name is James Weatherly, and I am the CDBG Grant Administrator with the Southwest Region Planning Commission. I will start by providing a brief overview of the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, and then I will tell you about this particular application.

CDBG funds are available to municipalities for projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 a year for each of the following categories: public facility improvements, housing projects, economic development, and emergency funds. Feasibility study funds are available for up to \$25,000. I have provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that include the area HUD income limits.

The proposed application to the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is for up to \$500,000. The CDBG funds will be used to rehabilitate 105 Castle Street by the Monadnock Affordable Housing Corporation, a nonprofit affiliate of Keene Housing. 105 Castle Street is home to a variety of uses, including serving as the home of Monadnock Collaborative, ServiceLink, Choices for Independence, and serving as a distribution point for the Meals on Wheels program administered by Home Health Care. The facility also provides a community space and laundry facilities for Harper Acres residents, a Keene Housing development that provides housing to low-income seniors and disabled persons. Rehabilitation of the facility will address accessibility, energy efficiency, and capital improvements and specific retrofits aimed at improving the delivery of public services.

The exact percentage of low- and moderate-income benefit is being determined; however, all of Harper Acre's residents are low- to moderate-income. I have provided a handout describing the project. The project conforms to Cheshire County's Housing and Community Development Plan, last passed in January of 2019, specifically the goal to "Support existing... nonprofit agencies that provide services to lower-income people".

I am also here today with Josh Meehan and Maryann Ferguson from Keene Housing who will provide additional project details.

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The Chair then recognized Josh Meehan to address the grant request. Meehan described the project at Castle Street and said several building issues, including roofing, structural, and HVAC, all need rehabilitation. They have been working with architects, and it is anticipated that the project will cost about \$1.8M. The rest of the monies will come from Eversource and Monadnock Collaborative, with construction to begin in 2021 and conclude in 2022. Maryann Ferguson of Monadnock Collaborative then spoke and highlighted the work being done for veterans and low-income individuals. She outlined several other community support programs and said a very close relationship with the County exists on many programs. She discussed the reason for maintaining their presence in Keene and noted that the renovation would enable them to stay at their present location for the next twenty years.

The Chair then opened the floor to public comments and questions about the proposed CDBG project. **No public comments were received.**

The Chair then opened the floor to staff and commissioners for comment. Commissioner Englund asked which building on Castle was being renovated. He also asked about the definition of low to moderate-income. Weatherly answered both questions to the Commissioners satisfaction.

The Chair moved to close the public hearing for the proposed Community Development Block Grant application and asked for a motion on the CDBG grant application.

Commissioner Wozmak moved to approve the submittal of the application and vote to authorize County Administrator Chris Coates and the County Commissioner Chair as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG application, and upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Authorized Designees to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The Second Public Hearing on Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance was then taken-up by the Chair, and he opened the second public hearing for discussion and recognized James Weatherly to address the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

Weatherly then said that if any displacement occurs as a result of the proposed CDBG project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed. The Act requires that displaced households or businesses in a project using federal funds must be found comparable housing or commercial space in a comparable neighborhood at a comparable price. Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-Displacement and Relocation

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Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place, and in the event that it is discovered that this specific project does displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA prior to obligating or expending funds. At this time, displacement is not anticipated for the proposed project as 105 Castle Street is not a residential property.

The Chair then opened the floor to public comments and questions about the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan, and **no comments were received.**

The Chair then opened the floor to staff and commissioners for comments, and **no comments were received.**

The Chair then closed the public hearing for the Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan public hearing and asked for a motion to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan.

Commissioner Wozmak moved to adopt the Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan plan and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The documents necessary for the submittal of the CDBG application were provided for signing.

Master Agenda Item #832: Clean Power Coalition of NH - was then taken-up for discussion and to receive an informational briefing from Henry Herndon on the Clean Power Coalition of NH and vote to adopt program membership and Cheshire County participation.

Herndon provided the following slides and information to the Commissioners.



Cheshire County

Subject: Community Power
Wednesday, December 16th, 2020 | 9am

Henry Herndon
Director of Local Energy Solutions
henry@cleanenergynh.org
781-439-2177

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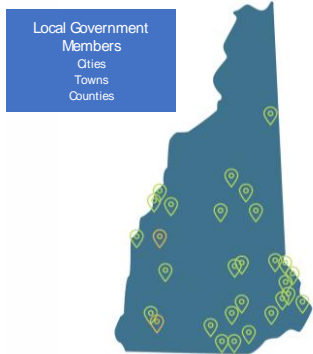
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Who is Clean Energy NH?



www.CleanEnergyNH.org

A neutral, expert source of information and education for New Hampshire communities



- **501(c)(3) Nonprofit**
- **Membership-Based**
 - +130 Clean Tech Businesses
 - +300 Individuals
 - 29 Local Government Members
- **Education Focused**
 - Legislative and regulatory policy
 - Market development
 - Technical assistance for community energy projects

Overview of Community Power



RSA 53-E, Relative to Aggregation of Electric Customers by Municipalities & Counties

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Benefits of Community Power Aggregations



Local Control

Democratizing energy procurement to the community level



Lower Costs

MA, NY, CA and other markets have demonstrated lower rates than regulated utilities



Renewables

Build & Buy Clean Energy



Resilience

New Technologies
Market Competition
Price Signals
Customer Empowerment

Process for Implementation

- 1 **Form Electric Aggregation Committee**
May be sub-committee of Energy Committee
- 2 **Author Electric Aggregation Plan**
See RSA 53-E
<https://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/III/53-E/53-E-mrg.htm>
- 3 **Legislative Body Vote Approves Electric Aggregation Plan**
- 4 **Procure Power, Notify Customers, & Launch**

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Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH)

- State-wide public power nonprofit providing administrative and logistic support for Community Power
 - Governed by member communities, financial/operational transparency
 - Focused on member education, empowerment, and capacity building over-time
- Pooled procurement, economies of scale, no redundant costs
 - Portfolio of contracts (multi-year, short-term), including building new, in-state renewables (risk management)
 - Joint regulatory/legislative advocacy to reform markets and remove regulatory barriers

<u>CPCNH Founding Members</u>	Population	Reported Annual kWh	Annual Retail Supply Value @ \$0.07/kWh	Conservative Scenario for Annual Reserve/Operating Fund (\$0.001/kWh)
Lebanon	13,602	80,000,000	\$5,600,000	\$80,000
Hanover	11,500	30,500,000	\$2,135,000	\$30,500
Nashua	89,246	296,000,000	\$20,720,000	\$296,000
Cheshire County	-	-	-	-
Total:	114,348	406,500,000	\$28,455,000	\$406,500

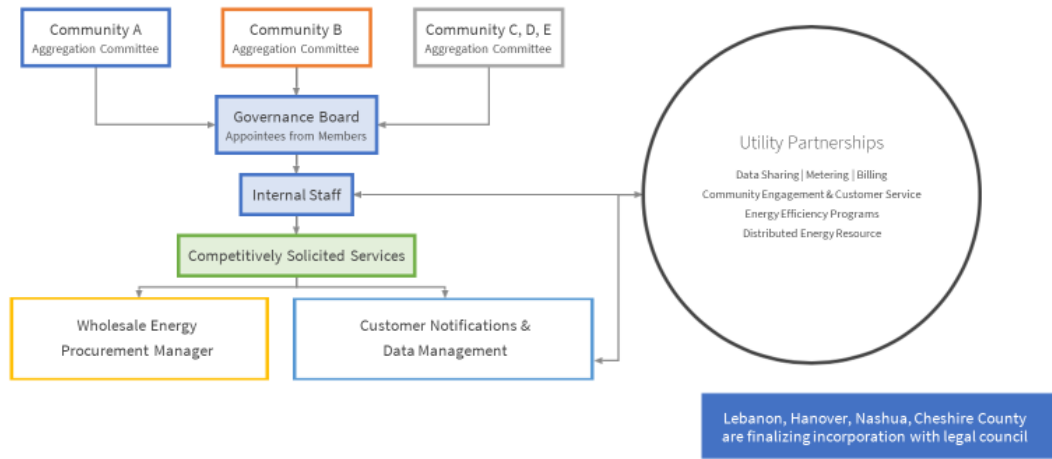
Candidates for CPCNH Membership by March 2022:

- ~35 cities, towns, and counties
- ~650,000,000 annual kilowatt-hours
- ~\$56,000,000 annual retail energy supply revenue
- \$0.001/kWh mark-up = \$650,000 operating/reserve fund

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Operations: CPCNH Organization Chart



Henry Herndon

Clean Energy NH
Director, Local Energy Solutions
7814392177
henry@cleanenergynh.org
www.cleanenergynh.org

An extended discussion then began about the advantages for the County to be involved with Clean Energy NH and the newly forming municipal and County organization to be known as Community Power Coalition of NH (CPCNH).

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Herndon said that the purpose of CPCNH is for local governments, cities, towns, and counties to procure and provide electricity and services for their residents and businesses.

He said that CPCNH is in final stages of formalizing its legal foundational documents and its initial membership will include the cities of Nashua and Lebanon, the town of Hanover, and Cheshire County as well as up to thirty-one other towns and cities across the state.

Herndon then discussed the advantages to joining CPCNH saying that local control, lower costs, the use of renewable energy sources, and energy resilience were all reasons that many communities are interested in joining together to purchase energy for their communities.

A number of other advantages including the use of RSA 53-E to enable local power generation was covered in detail.

The Commissioners thanked Herndon for his presentation and said that the program sounds very interesting and needed. Coates and Bouchard will bring recommendations to the Commissioners for consideration in the next few weeks.

The Commissioners then addressed Master Agenda Item #834: 2020 to 2021 Budget Rollovers. Trombly was recognized and discussed the rollovers from 2020 to 2021.

She reviewed the list which is larger than normal for year-end roll overs due to the budgetary freeze on capital expenditures instituted by the Commissioners at the beginning of the pandemic until the tax revenues from the towns could be accurately assessed in December.

She said that she was informed that Stoddard just sent out their tax bills last week and will not be able to make the full tax payment to the County until they receive their remissions. She said that as of today, she believes that the other towns have submitted or plan to submit their full payments. A discussion of how town tax bills are handled began and it was discussed that some of the tax payments will probably not be received until late January.

Following discussion Commissioner Wozmak moved to encumber the rollover list from the 2020 to the 2021 budget and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Wozmak then moved to lift the freeze on Capital expenditures once eighty-percent (80%) of all tax revenues have been collected from the towns. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

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The County Administrator Weekly Operations Report was then taken-up for discussion.

Coates said that the conversation with the Hundred Nights shelter organization has been on-going with the County and the City of Keene and the project is moving forward. A Memorandum of understanding has been drafted and has been sent for signatures.

He discussed the recent donation to Diluzio Ambulance and said that the following press release for Diulzo was sent to the Keene Sentinel:

December 8, 2020

Press Release: CHESHIRE COUNTY PROVIDES A GIFT OF CRITICAL CARE TRANSPORT VENTILATORS AND INFUSION PUMPS TO REGIONAL FIRST RESPONDERS

DELUZIO AMBULANCE TO RECEIVE A GIFT OF CRITICAL MEDICAL EQUIPMENT FROM THE CHESHIRE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Commissioners of Cheshire County have identified Fire, Ambulance, and EMT Services as critical infrastructure to our communities. Due to staffing shortages, cities and town's fiscal realities and ever-changing certification requirements is placing many of Cheshire County's First Responders in crisis.

The commissioners are committed to working with and supporting the city and towns to address this emergency.

Cheshire County would like to announce the gift of three Zoll Critical Care Transport Ventilators, and ten Baxter IV Infusion Pumps to Diluzio Ambulance Service. This gift was made available through the Federal CARES Relief Funding received through the State of New Hampshire.

These are unprecedented times due to the current COVID pandemic; Emergency Medical Responders face challenges that most people in public safety and public health have never seen. DiLuzio Ambulance is an integral player on the frontlines of this pandemic. They are an active participant in the regional mutual aid system and provide primary and back-up ambulance service and paramedic intercept services to fourteen towns in Cheshire County. This equipment will significantly enhance the care that Diluzio provides and greatly impact all communities throughout the region.

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Rob Diluzio states, "*Respiratory compromise is one of the most common and critical symptoms of COVID-19. With these ventilators, not only will we be able to provide advanced ventilator support for patients in the pre-hospital environment, we will also be able to more efficiently and effectively transport critically ill patients between our local hospital and other specialized tertiary care facilities*".

The ventilators give Diluzio the ability to provide better respiratory care with exact settings for each patient. Not only will these units provide ventilator support to COVID patients, but they will also be used to treat other patient populations such as those with other respiratory compromising conditions.

Diluzio goes on to state, "*The addition of the IV Infusion Pumps will allow us to better manage some of the most critically ill COVID-19 and septic patients. To treat severe sepsis in the out of hospital environment, we can administer IV fluids and vasoactive pharmacological agents. These interventions are most appropriate and sometimes required to be administered via an IV Infusion Pump to better control and manage the doses and volumes given. Other medications and treatment modalities can also be provided via these pumps*".

The County is significantly invested in enhancing the EMS and pre-hospital care, and is why the County Commissioners are honored to fund this needed gift. They will continue to look at ways to collaborate with the City of Keene and Cheshire County towns to ensure these emergency



services continue to provide for the wellbeing of the citizens of Cheshire County.

This gift is a symbol of that continued commitment.

-30-

Christopher C. Coates
County Administrator
Cheshire County
ccoates@co.cheshire.nh.us
603-355-3031

Coates then said the following letter was sent to the Delegation concerning COVID-19 issues. He said that this formal notice would bring all affected parties to the same understanding of the rules already established by the County.

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Rep. Daniel Eaton
43 Shedd Hill Road
Stoddard, NH 03464

Rep. Paul Berch
956 River Road
Westmoreland, NH 03467

Representatives Eaton and Berch,

I am writing to notify you that at the direction of the Board of Commissioners, that henceforth all persons who enter any building on Cheshire County Campuses are required to wear masks at all times.

Further, anyone attending a meeting held by the Delegation or by a Delegation member, whether a committee of the Delegation, public hearing, one on one meetings with county staff, or a full Delegation meeting, will be required to wear a mask.

The County will continue to strive to create an environment that meets the CDC's criteria and guidelines with pre-screening, social distancing, disinfecting, sanitizer, and mask.

The County will also continue to provide a telecommunication alternative for all meetings held by the Delegation utilizing the Zoom Platform.

I am asking that each State Representative respond to this email by end of the business day on 12/17/20, communicating that they will follow the request of the Commissioners and County Administrator and wear a mask at all times while on any Cheshire County Campus.

It will be my intention that if 100% of the Delegation does not agree to wearing a mask, that the



Executive Committee would meet virtually for their budget reviews.

Our goal is your wellbeing and the health and safety of County staff and Elected Officials.

Chris Coates
County Administrator
Cheshire County

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Coates then said that he hosted Marge Shepardson on his weekend radio program to discuss the Carbon Cash Back program. He then said that a joint Zoom meeting with the City of Keene is under discussion for broadcast in January.

The Commissioners then returned to a discussion of the letter sent to the Delegation and the importance of everyone wearing a mask while on County campuses. The untimely death of the new Speaker of the NH House due to COVID-19 was covered, and the rise of the COVID infection rate at the state offices was discussed.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 12/16/2020 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Wozmak addressed the cost of medical services for a state prisoner that totals nearly \$26K and the cost of the water and sewer bill for the Department of Corrections from the City of Keene.

Commissioner Englund moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.

General Discussion: Commissioner Weed asked if the County has been contacted by any of the Opiate Attorneys. Coates said that no contact has been made thus far.

Superintendent Iosue was then recognized and he asked for authorization from the Commissioners to dispose of a 2007 Crown Victoria cruiser whose value is rated at \$500.00. He said an ad was placed in the Keene Sentinel seeking bids and only one seal bid has been received thus far. The Commissioners asked some clarifying questions about the bid process and following discussion **Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the surplus vehicle following the public bid process as long as the bids exceed \$350.00. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

Following review of the documents sent to the Commissioners in their weekly meeting information packets, **Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the compensation adjustment for S. B. based on increased duties and responsibilities in their new position. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

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Iosue then asked the Commissioners to sign an authorization letter for an officer at the Department of Corrections to be appointed to the state correctional officer certification committee due to the termination of employment of the previous officer.

Commissioner Wozmak moved to authorize the Assistant County Administrator to sign the document electronically. The other Commissioners verbally consented and confirmed the authorization.

At 10:46 AM, there being no further public business to conduct, Commissioner Enlgund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Weed. Upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:

R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:

R. Englund, Clerk