

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, January 13, 2021
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: Robert Englund and Terry Clark, Commissioner Wozmak absent with notice.

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Sheriff Rivera, HR Director K. May, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s):

At 8:30 AM, Commissioner Englund opened the meeting, and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Commissioners attending the meeting. Commissioners Englund and Clark responded as "present."

Commissioner Englund 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 Englund 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.

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:

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- 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 8:34 AM, the Chair opened the meeting and recognized Sheriff Rivera, who spoke to a concern about the vacation cap accrual rule. He said the dispatch center is experiencing a shortfall of personnel. He said the department is having to pay for 156 hours of overtime compensation per week. He is investigating alternatives but wanted to make the Commissioners aware of the on-going issue. Commissioner Englund asked about the training period for new dispatchers. Rivera said that it takes a minimum of three months for a new dispatcher to work independently. A discussion of options and using per-diem personnel to fill the shifts were discussed.

Trombly then covered the impact of overtime costs on the County budget for all facilities with the assessment that the overall cost is dependent on the pay rate of the personnel involved, but currently, it is not a significant issue.

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Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates said that many conversations have been on-going with the congressional and senatorial offices due to the potential civil unrest projected by Federal government law enforcement agencies. Rivera spoke to the preparation being planned for this week until after the new president's inauguration.

He then discussed a meeting that reviewed the acquisition of body cameras under New Hampshire HB 253 for all state police personnel. Coates outlined the bill's possible impact and the Commissioners' recent objection to the cost of implementing the cameras County-wide.

Rivera said that the House Bill opens the opportunity for municipalities to obtain the cameras, but it does not mandate the implementation. He also said that the State would be the source of providing the equipment to anyone who wishes to participate through a grant process. Coates quoted some language in the bill that seems to mandate the equipment. Rivera confirmed that the initial intention of HB 253 had been changed to mandated body cameras be worn by all law enforcement.

Coates then said that he has a meeting with Senator Shaheen's office today to discuss the Federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services (SAMSHA) grant for the System of Care program and the importance of continuing funding during these trying times. He also stated that a conversation be had with Senator Shaheen's Office concerning the continuation of Medicaid funding to those that enter correction facilities. Currently those inmates that are on Medicaid that enter into our Department of Corrections have their Medicaid continue for 30 days, after that time they lose their Medicaid and the burden of any medical cost is carried by the county, unless they are federal inmates which are covered by the federal government. Congresswoman Annie Kuster brought forward a bill that was co-sponsored by Senator Cory Booker which was never acted on in the senate. It is New Hampshire Association of Counties (NHAC's) hope that this bill is addressed in this coming session of congress.

He then said that Sullivan County has reached out to see what financial tools Cheshire County used to get the new courthouse constructed. He said that he spoke with the Monadnock Economic Development (MEDC) staff, and they will follow-up with them to review the process used to build the facility.

Coates then discussed the bridge construction's progress linking Hinsdale and Brattleboro, Vermont, and reviewed his and Commissioner Clark's participation in the process. He said that an overview could be provided to the other Commissioners in the next few weeks.

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Coates then reminded everyone that the Delegation Personnel Committee would convene on January 25th to hear a termination appeal at 1:30 PM.

In response to Commissioner Englund's question, Coates said that the NH Association of Counties (NHAC) meeting scheduled for this afternoon is the Commissioners Council. He said that the Election of officers and the establishment of dues are the agenda items to be addressed.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 01/06/2021 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Clark moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.

At 9:13 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter a non-public session to discuss an issue pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II (a) to discuss the dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of discussion in a non-public session, Commissioner Englund moved to support the Sheriff in the termination of an employee for insubordination and failure to comply with legally enacted rules and orders under the State of Emergency implemented by the State and County. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 09:28 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to return to public session and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business: None

New Business:

General Discussion:

At 09:43 AM, there being no further public business to conduct, Commissioner Clark moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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Immediately following the conclusion of the public business session and the adjournment of the meeting, Master Agenda Item #839: Tour of Hundred Nights Shelter was completed with a short inspection tour of the bus located in the County Latchis parking lot being used to provide winter shelter for the homeless by Administrator Coates, Commissioner Englund, and Assistant Administrator Bouchard.

The following images were taken on the tour and are provided for public informational purposes



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Minutes recorded by:

Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Reviewed and submitted by:

T. Clark, Clerk