

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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: Jack Wozmak, Robert Englund, and Terry Clark

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director May, County Attorney McLaughlin, ARP Project Manager Pearson, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

**Guest(s):**

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

**Commissioner Wozmak 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:

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

- 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 recognized HR Director May, who distributed a document entitled COVID Employee Travel Guidance Update, which follows:

*To: All Cheshire County Employees*

*From: Office of the County Administrator*

*Date: April 1, 2021*

*Re: COVID Employee Travel Guidance & Mask Mandate Update*

***Maplewood Nursing Home Employees should refer to the MNH policies or speak with Employee Health/Infection Control for Long-Term Care specific guidance***

***The below policy will take effect on 4/01/2021 and remain in effect unless and until updated guidance is released by the CDC and the State of NH.***

***This policy may be amended as this situation evolves. Employees who decide to go on vacation during this time frame will need to adhere to this policy.***

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*Under Emergency Order #74 a Mask Mandate remains in place for the State of NH; additionally Cheshire County requires that masks be worn by employees and visitors in all buildings and offices where social distancing is not possible.*

*Given the ever evolving situation involving the COVID-19 pandemic, this County is taking steps to help keep you, your co-workers and your families healthy. Below is important information to keep in mind as you plan your travel.*

- 1. Non-essential international travel is highly discouraged*
- 2. Domestic travel outside of New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut or Rhode Island is discouraged, especially by public transportation (bus, train, plane) or to metropolitan areas.*
- 3. When making your travel plans, please consider obtaining travel insurance, including coverage for charter flights if commercial airlines will not allow you to board because you or family members are ill.*
- 4. Please understand that because of the rapidly evolving situation, while you are traveling, it may be possible that an outbreak occurs in the area where you are visiting. That may impact your ability to obtain medical care, you may find yourself subject to quarantine orders by that area and traveling out of that area may be challenging.*
- 5. If you choose to travel internationally (including Canada), on a cruise, to any area outside of New Hampshire, Vermont, Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut or Rhode Island, or by plane, train or bus anywhere, you will need to self-quarantine for 10 days following the last date of any high risk, non-essential travel.*
  - a. People meeting the criteria for high-risk travel have the option of ending their quarantine after day 7 by getting a test on day 3-5 of their quarantine to test for active SARS-Co V-2 infection (SARS-Co V-2 is the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19); this test must be a molecular test (e.g., PCR based test); antigen tests are not accepted for this purpose.*
  - b. If the test is obtained on day 3-5 of quarantine, the person is asymptomatic, and the test is negative, then the person can end their quarantine after 7 days, but they must still self-observe for symptoms of COVID-19 and strictly adhere to COVID mitigation measures (social distancing, avoiding social and group gatherings, wearing a face mask when around other people, practicing*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

- c. frequent hand hygiene, etc.). Any new symptoms of COVID-19 should prompt the person to isolate and seek testing again (even if the person recently tested out of quarantine).*
- d. This 7-day quarantine "test-out" option ONLY applies to travel-related quarantine (not quarantine due to a high-risk close contact exposure to a person with COVID-19.*
- e. If you are able to work from home and your Department Head approves, you will be expected to do so for the quarantine period.*
- f. As applicable, you may be eligible to use your accrued paid time off. Prior to reporting to your worksite, you will need to contact Human Resources.*

***Exceptions to Travel Quarantine***

*The following people do NOT need to quarantine after high-risk travel:*

- 1. Persons who are 14 days beyond the second dose of their COVID-19 vaccine (i.e., 14 days after full vaccination).*
- 2. Persons who are within 90 days of a prior SARS-CoV-2 infection that was diagnosed by PCR or antigen testing (if a person had a previous infection that was more than 90 days prior, then they are still subject to travel quarantine).*

*Such persons, however, still need to monitor themselves for symptoms of COVID-19 daily, practice social distancing, avoid social and other group gatherings, always wear a face mask when around other people, and practice good hand hygiene at all times.*

*Additional exceptions to the travel quarantine can be made by businesses, organizations, schools, etc. for people traveling due to "essential travel" purposes who do not meet one of the above two criteria.*

*Essential travel includes:*

- 1. For work, school, personal safety, medical care, care of others, parental shared custody, for medication, and for food or beverage (brief trips for take-out and groceries only).*
- 2. Travel for students and their parents or guardians who are visiting institutions of higher learning or preparatory high schools as potential future students, including allowing the students to remain at the schools for overnight stays.*

*It is important that you verify with the state you are traveling to that you will not be restricted from visiting or required to quarantine while you are there. Each state has developed their own guidelines for out-of-state visitors that you can find on their Department of Health website.*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*Please frequently check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website for updated important information regarding the following topics:*

- a. Travel advisories regarding the places you will visit and travel through.*
- b. Guidance for travel within the U.S.: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>*
- c. State of NH travel guidance: <https://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/cdcs/covid19/documents/employee-travel-guidance.pdf>*

*This will take effect 4/01/2021 and remain in place based on CDC and/or State recommendations. Please understand that these are precautionary measures to help prevent you, your co-workers, and the individuals we serve from becoming infected.*

A discussion concerning the continued use of masks began, and language will be added to reflect the mask mandate and state in plain language that wearing masks in County buildings is not optional. The Superintendent of the Department of Corrections reported out on the number of staff vaccinated and the potential to bring the vaccine on-site to encourage "vaccine on-boarding."

Coates then introduced Master Agenda Item #868: Introduction of Will Pearson for the County implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act Project and outlined the potential to receive up to \$14M this year with \$7M due in about 60 days.

Pearson said that only Cheshire and possibly Stratford County are preparing a framework to receive, implement, and manage the funds and manage against the ARP federal program requirements. He outlined his efforts to date and said that he would contact Senator Shaheen's office later in the day to introduce himself and discuss the issues around the receipt and management of the ARP funds.

The Commissioners asked questions concerning the administration and communications that need to be done with the County's municipalities. Pearson, Coates, and Bouchard all offered options to ensure that progress is communicated to all interested parties.

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates stated that the Delegation passed the 2021 budget on Monday, including the \$4.7M Energy Project for the Keene campus. He said that a meeting with the project principals would be held shortly to establish a timeline and implementation plan.

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

He then discussed the on-going issues and problems with the Nursing Home's fire alarms and their failure to connect with Keene Mutual Aid in Keene reliably. He said that Countryside Alarm was chosen to implement a solution to using the internet to send the alarm signals. The installation is in the testing phase and appears to be working correctly. It has taken up to 7 minutes using the standard dialer over a copper line to complete calls, or in some cases, no connection is established at all.

Coates then said that the Service Link group moved from their Castle Street to the Hannah Grimes Marketplace on Roxbury Street due to the building's recent fire. No date has been set for their return as it is unknown when Castle Street will be habitable again.

Coates then said that the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention (MCVP) rehab of their office space is complete, minus the installation of a sink. He went on to say that the Sheriff's basement area has also neared completion and is almost ready to be used.

Coates reviewed the Monday evening Budget meeting details and said that the outside agency funding issue that was brought up was unusual and somewhat unexpected. A discussion of the voting results for each of the motions presented was covered. A discussion of the Delegation initiated bonus allocations for senior staff began. A program to distribute the funding among all staff that had not received CARES funding was discussed.

Coates then discussed the previous State Cost Shifting letter that the Commissioners issued approximately eighteen months ago and brought-up the pending bills concerning the funding of Thermal Energy Credits by the State to promote the use of non-fossil fuels. He said that pending legislation is threatening the program and could significantly impact the cost justification for PUC grants targeted for installing Biomass boilers. An extended discussion of the significant number of State cost-shifting issues that have been put in place over the past decades was covered in detail. A discussion of the multiple problems and issues, including the enormous burden on the local taxpayers and the State University System's gutting, was covered.

At 9:47 AM, County Attorney McLaughlin was recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #869: Semi-Annual report of the County Attorney. The report he presented follows.

*Office of the Cheshire County Attorney*

*The primary responsibility of the Office of the Cheshire County Attorney is the prosecution of felony level crimes in the Cheshire County Superior Court. When a felony arrest is made or a felony investigation is completed and referred to our Office, the prosecutors/attorneys review the cases, consult with police departments and make a determination as to what criminal charges*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*will be brought. This process can include filing complaints in the Cheshire County Superior Court and making presentations before a Grand Jury. The attorneys handle all pre-trial procedures and hearings, and if a case is not resolved by a plea or other non-trial resolution, it proceeds to a jury trial.*

*The case load at the Office of the Cheshire County Attorney continues to be heavy. During 2020, approximately 369 felony level case files and more than 77 probation violations were handled by this Office. Attorneys formally presented approximately 268 charges to the Grand Jury for indictment consideration, and approximately 104 individuals were indicted. Additionally, attorneys from this Office evaluated 241 DCYF reports, issued 17 "one party" authorizations, and handled 192 unattended death calls in Cheshire County.*

*The Cheshire County Circuit Court Prosecutor Program ("CCCCPP"), under the direct supervision of the County Attorney, continues to be successful. The program consists of the Regional Prosecutor Program ("RPP"), which prosecutes cases for eleven (11) towns in Cheshire County, and the City of Keene Prosecutor, who prosecutes cases for the Keene Police Department. The prosecutors in the CCCCCPP are both Assistant Cheshire County Attorneys. The attorneys in the CCCCCPP handle all misdemeanor and violation level offenses that arise in the twelve (12) participating towns/city, and also handle Administrative License Suspension hearings associated with DWI cases. Additionally, the RPP handles many of the eleven (11) towns' serious juvenile matters. During 2020, approximately 388 case files were handled and processed from the eleven (11) towns served by the RPP. The Keene Police Department Prosecutor's Office handled and processed approximately 1,583 cases during 2020. The cases handled by the CCCCCPP account for the large majority of all cases coming before the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court – Keene District Division. The CCCCCPP has increased efficiency, improved officer training, and provided more uniform prosecution policies among participating police departments in Cheshire County. The towns and the City of Keene both benefit from the expertise and resources of the County Attorney's Office. Conversely, the County Attorney's Office benefits from increased communication between its Circuit Court and Superior Court prosecutors, who often encounter the same defendants, victims, and legal issues in the two different Courts.*

*The prosecutor for the RPP throughout 2020 was Shanna O'Rorke. Shanna became the prosecutor for the RPP in March 2019. Shanna is a 2012 graduate of the University of New Hampshire School of Law, and, prior to becoming the RPP prosecutor, she worked as the Assistant Director of the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention ("MCVP") for four (4) years. Many of the cases prosecuted in Circuit Court are charges involving domestic violence, and Shanna's prior experience working at MCVP has proven to be invaluable.*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*The prosecutor for the Keene Police Department throughout 2020 was Alex Gatzoulis. Alex started his position with the Keene Police Department in April 2019. Alex is a 2008 graduate of Nova Southeastern University, Shepard Broad Law Center, and previously worked as a prosecutor in the Merrimack and Rockingham Counties Attorney's Offices as well as serving as the police prosecutor for the Weare Police Department from January 2014 through June 2017.*

*In addition to the attorneys in the CCCCP, retired Police Officer John Dudek assists as a part-time prosecutor for the RPP, handling mostly arraignments and review hearings in the Circuit Court.*

*In 2020, in addition to Shanna and Alex, the County had six experienced prosecutors (plus me) handling felony prosecutions in the Cheshire County Superior Court – Kathleen O'Reilly, John Webb, Keith Clouatre, Jean Kilham, Ellie Moran and Kerry O'Neill.*

*Kathleen O'Reilly is now in her 25<sup>th</sup> year with the Office. Kathleen is extremely hard working and shoulders a heavy caseload. Based on the size of this Office, its growth over the years and the number of cases we handle at both the circuit and superior court levels, in late 2015, I created the position of Deputy Cheshire County Attorney and named Kathleen Deputy Cheshire County Attorney, and she continued in that role throughout 2020. Assistant County Attorney John Webb is one of our more experienced trial attorneys, having joined the Office in 2007. John is formerly of the Merrimack County Attorney's Office, where he was a veteran prosecutor. Prior to that, John served as a Law Clerk to the Superior Court. John's experience and expertise are highly valued and relied upon by all members of this Office. Joining our staff in late 2009 was Attorney Keith Clouatre. Keith is a very talented and experienced trial attorney who handles many of our difficult child sexual assault cases. Keith previously served as both an Assistant County Attorney and the County Attorney in Coos County. Jean Kilham started with this Office in March of 2008 as a prosecutor with the RPP, then assumed the role of the Keene Police Department's Prosecutor for a number of years, and in 2016 Jean transferred into her current role as a felony prosecutor. Jean is very hard working and is highly respected by law enforcement and the Cheshire County Defense Bar, and in March 2019 took over the domestic violence prosecutor position in this Office. Ellie Moran started as a prosecutor in this Office as the Keene Police Department Prosecutor in 2016, and began prosecuting felony cases in this Office in March 2019. Ellie's work ethic and attention to detail have served her well in her position as a felony prosecutor. Lastly, in October 2018 this Office hired Kerry O'Neill. Kerry has been an attorney since 2005 and is a very experienced litigator, having worked for the NH Public Defender Program in the Keene Office from 2005 to 2015. After leaving the public defender office in 2015 Kerry worked as an associate in the Keene firm of Bradley & Faulkner, where her practice focused on criminal defense and family law matters. Kerry is well known and highly respected by the criminal law practitioners, court staff and judges in Cheshire County.*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*The responsibilities of the attorneys in our Office are many. All Assistant County Attorneys, the Deputy County attorney and I are available to assist local law enforcement with case investigations and one-party authorizations. Additionally, an attorney must be available to consult on fatal accident scenes where potential criminal charges may be brought, as well as to consult on unattended deaths, and related investigations. Furthermore, I continue to meet monthly with investigators from the Keene Police Department and, upon request, with other law enforcement agencies. I also attend the monthly meetings of the Cheshire County Chiefs of Police Association, the Cheshire County SART (Sexual Assault Resource Team), and the Cheshire County Behavioral Health Court Program. Moreover, I also attend the weekly team meetings of the Cheshire County Drug Court ("CCDC"), and I am responsible for overseeing all the cases that are resolved with a plea and sentence that involve participation in the CCDC. Furthermore, I, and all the prosecutors, prosecute the numerous violations of probation that are brought by the NH Department of Corrections.*

*In addition, the attorneys in our Office meet regularly with members of law enforcement, social services, crisis workers, victim/witness coordinators, mental health professionals, and medical specialists in order to ensure the continued success of the Child Advocacy Center ("CAC") in Cheshire County. The ideology behind the center is the institution of multidisciplinary teams trained in the investigation and prosecution of physical and sexual abuse against children. They work together as a unified team from the inception of any report of child abuse that occurs anywhere in Cheshire County. The CAC is having a significant and positive impact on the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of physical and/or sexual abuse on children. In 2020, attorneys attended 44 CAC interviews.*

*Another important service provided by this Office is that of liaison between victims/witnesses and the court system. The success of any prosecution hinges on victims and witnesses being informed of, and feeling comfortable with, the intricacies and nuances of the court system. Throughout much of 2020, this Office had two (2) victim/witness coordinator positions that were filled by Sarah Hoskins and Aunaliese Swanson. Sarah is a victim/witness coordinator of vast experience, originally starting with this Office in August of 2000 as part of an AmeriCorps program focusing on victims of domestic violence. Auna has been working as a victim/witness coordinator since July 2017. Prior to taking on that position, Auna worked in this Office as an Administrative Assistant. Auna's transition to the victim/witness coordinator position has been seamless and her prior experience working as a Deputy Clerk in the Cheshire County Superior Court has served her well in the transition to her new position. Because Sarah and Auna are involved with the cases being handled by the nine (9) attorneys in this Office, their caseloads are extremely high. For the year 2020, Sarah and Auna each handled approximately two-hundred (200) cases. In addition, in 2020, the Delegation approved my request for a new position – Director of Restorative Justice and Victim/Witness Services, and that position was filled by*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*Patrick Heneghan. Patrick started in this new position in October 2020. Patrick's background is in education, the analysis of and implementation of new systems, and restorative justice practices and principles. Patrick has been tasked with developing a plan for educating victims and others involved in the criminal justice system on restorative practices and implementing those practices in appropriate cases when victims are interested. In addition, Patrick is the direct supervisor of Sarah and Auna and will also be involved in handling cases as a victim/witness coordinator.*

*In 2019, the Delegation approved my request for a part-time investigator to help attorneys with issues that inevitably arise with the prosecution of cases. Those issues include: tracking down witnesses; conducting follow up interviews of victims and witnesses; obtaining medical and court records and various other documents; and listening to jail calls from incarcerated defendants. This Office was incredibly fortunate to be able to hire retired Keene Police Lieutenant James McLaughlin as our investigator. Jim retired after 40 years with the Keene Police Department, where he lead the detective bureau and was a nationally recognized expert in cases involving the investigation of sexual offenders. Jim's wealth of knowledge, both legal and investigative, is invaluable, he has been a great addition to this Office, and throughout 2020 Jim's work on various cases has proven to be incredibly helpful.*

*Lastly, the Cheshire County Attorney's Office administrative staff is responsible for the day to day operations of the Office. In 2020, there were several personnel changes within the administrative staff. In late March our Office was devastated by the loss of Administrative Assistant Gayle Buchanan, who passed away on March 20<sup>th</sup>. A beloved member of our staff, Gayle joined our Office in 2009 and was an integral part of the daily operations. Known for her sense of humor and infectious laugh, Gayle is fondly remembered and missed. Making up the rest of the administrative staff was Office Manager Chloe Bosquet, and Administrative Assistants Amanda Crocker and Katrina Mabe, with Natalie Haley assisting the Regional Prosecutor Program. Chloe joined the staff in 2009. Katrina was hired in August 2017; Amanda was hired in March 2018 and Natalie was hired in 2019. In July we were fortunate to hire Pam Patnode to assist the Regional Prosecutor Program, allowing Natalie Haley to transition to assisting felony prosecutors. Pam worked for the Cheshire County Superior Court for over 20 years, and her vast experience has been a tremendous asset. The administrative support staff continues to grow and adapt to the challenges of a changing workflow necessitated by the Felonies First program and evolving information security requirements. Never before has this adaptability been as crucial as it is during the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are extremely fortunate to have administrative staff who rise to these challenges, working as a team to find creative solutions to time-sensitive problems. They are diligent, professional and committed, and bring a positive attitude to an often challenging environment.*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*Since 2013, this Office has been required to adapt to changes brought about by the criminal justice/court system in New Hampshire; namely, the implementation of the Cheshire County Drug Court in 2013 and the Felonies First Program in 2016. For the most part, the implementation of both programs went fairly smoothly; and, ultimately, the programs have resulted in an improvement in the operation of the criminal justice system – including making improvements in efficiencies within the system and providing an alternative to lengthy periods of incarceration for those criminal defendants struggling with an addiction.*

*Another effort this Office focused on throughout 2018, 2019 and 2020 was developing and implementing a system to resolve those felony cases that can (and should) be resolved quickly and early on in the process. Early Case Resolution ("ECR") consists of dedicating an experienced prosecutor and experienced public defender to cull out those felony cases that are not complicated, generally do not involve citizen victims, and which lend themselves to being resolved fairly and early on in the process, e.g. possession of drugs, driving offenses, merchant thefts, etc. The process involves the dedicated prosecutor (who, for 2020, continued to be Kerry O'Neill) identifying ECR cases and making a fair and very reasonable plea offer to defense counsel at the time of arraignment (within 10 to 20 days of arrest), and requiring defense counsel to respond to that offer within 10 days. Depending on the defendant's criminal history, the dedicated prosecutor's offer will oftentimes include reducing a felony to a misdemeanor. If the plea offer is accepted, the case will be scheduled for a plea and sentencing hearing and the entire process from the time of arrest to resolution will take 45 to 60 days. If the plea offer is rejected, the case is re-assigned to a different prosecutor and goes forward the same as any other case; however, what is made clear is that the original plea offer will not be made again. The goal of ECR is to resolve those cases which should be resolved fairly and quickly, which, in turn, allows prosecutors more time to focus on those complex and serious cases that will likely go to trial. In 2018, 42 felony cases were referred for ECR resolution, which comprises approximately 10% of the felony cases referred to this Office for prosecution. In 2019, 30 felony cases were referred for ECR resolution. In 2020, 29 felony cases were referred for ECR resolution. In the future, it is hoped that a greater percentage of our cases will be resolved through the ECR process; however, for reasons beyond this Office's control, I am not convinced that will be the case.*

*Unlike 2015 through 2019, where the biggest challenge for this Office was responding to the continued influx of inexpensive and potent fentanyl to the region and the attendant crime associated with it, this Office's biggest challenge for 2020 – like most offices – was responding to how to continue to perform our jobs in the midst of a pandemic. Based on the nature of our work, most of the personnel in this Office were able to work remotely during the initial surge and second surge of the pandemic. Through the efforts and cooperation of the County Administration and IT Department, this Office was able to make a smooth transition to working*

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

*remotely, which enabled us to effectively perform our jobs. This Office appreciates and is thankful for the guidance and support throughout these trying times provided by the various County Departments we depend on. Not surprisingly, our case numbers were down for 2020 owing to a number of factors, including, most significantly: i) law enforcements' conscious (and appropriate) decision to minimize contact with the public except as absolutely necessary; and ii) the public's being homebound for the most part. Nevertheless, despite the lower case numbers, a number of significant and important cases still needed to be dealt with, which the court system and participants in the criminal justice system were able to do by conducting the vast majority of court business and hearings via WebEx (the Court's version of Zoom). As an example of how this pandemic affected our ability to conduct in-person court proceedings, in 2020 we had one jury trial (in August, which was one of a few held in the entire State throughout 2020), and we did not have grand jury (which we usually have monthly) during the months of March, April, May, June, July, November and December 2020.*

*In sum, I am proud to say that the County Attorney's Office was able to effectively conduct its business during a pandemic, and this Office is thankful and grateful for the support provided by the Cheshire County Delegation, Commissioners and Administration during these trying times and, not insignificantly, we are happy to put 2020 in our rearview mirror.*

*Respectfully submitted,*

---

*D. Chris McLaughlin*  
*Cheshire County Attorney*

McLaughlin then discussed the Restorative Justice program and said that the new Director is doing very well but has no experience in CJ but is learning quickly. He said that they are developing a framework for implementing the program based on other successful models from around the Country. McLaughlin pointed out that there does not seem to be very much information on recidivism involving adult offenders when asked about measurement criteria for determining the program's success once it is up and running.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

**Consent Agenda: Minutes of 03/10/2021 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Englund moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.**

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, March 24, 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

General Discussion: None

**At 10:08 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter non-public session Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) *Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general Community*, and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

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

**At 10:53 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to re-enter the public session and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**At 11:54 AM, there being no further public business to conduct, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Minutes recorded by:  
Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Reviewed and submitted by:  
T. Clark, Clerk