

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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, Grants Manager Bansley, ARPA Project Manager Pearson, HR Director May, Superintendent Iosue, Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s): Mike Kowalczyk, Rails to Trails

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:

- Provides public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

- 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 Calcutt and Fauth to discuss Master Agenda Item #871: Semi-Annual report of the Connected Families NH project. Calcutt presented and discussed the following slide deck.

Master Agenda Item #872: Drug Court Expansion Grant Application
Action Expected:

Bansley was recognized and asked the Commissioners to provide a vote to approve submitting an application to hire a recovery coach for the County Drug Court. Welsh described the need for a position and outlined the job function and expectations.

Following questions and comments from Commissioners and staff, **Commissioner Englund moved to vote to approve submitting a grant application to the U. S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance for \$500,000.00 with a match of \$166,667.00. The grant will run four years and will be used to hire a full-time recovery coach dedicated to Cheshire County Drug Court. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

Master Agenda Item #873: Master Agenda Item: Interdepartmental Grants Policy
Bansley reviewed the need to have the new Board of Commissioners discuss and vote to accept an update to the Cheshire County Interdepartmental Grants Policy. **Following a short review and questions, Commissioner Englund moved to accept the update to the policy and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #874: EDA Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant Acceptance was then taken up. Bansley explained the grant's reason and asked the Commissioners to formally accept the funding to meet the federal agency's financing requirements. Following discussion, **Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the application, accept the award and its terms and conditions, and identify Grants Manager Suzanne Bansley as its Authorized Representative. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #875: Rail-Trail Project Fiscal Sponsorship then addressed by the Commissioners. Bansley was recognized and discussed the Town of Swanzy and Pathways' request for fiscal sponsorship for grant writing and management on a long-term basis for multi-phased rail-trail reconstruction and enhancement of 82 miles of trails in Cheshire County.

Bansley explained the grant process services that would be provided to support the grant and Kowalczyk reviewed and described the work in developing the Rail-Trails project throughout the County and said that 83 miles of trails would be developed if full funding is received.

Commissioner Clark moved to support the work for fiscal sponsorship for grant writing and management on a long-term basis for multi-phased rail-trail reconstruction and enhancement of 82 miles of trails in Cheshire County. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #876: American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA)Update - Will Pearson

Pearson was then recognized and reviewed the current state of affairs with the federal information flow and discussed a letter sent to the Congressional and Senatorial offices.

The Commissioners asked questions about other counties and cities that have a position similar to Pearsons. Coates reviewed the various Counties' efforts and said that the NHAC is putting resources towards understanding funds' management. It was discussed that Pearson would be coordinating with all of the towns in the County and looking to leverage the potential synergies that will develop from the funding flow. A lengthy discussion covering the federal funding rules and regulations commenced, and the Commissioners and staff reviewed a large number of

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

possible funding opportunities. Also discussed was the pending Infrastructure funding that is pending for later in the year.

An ancillary discussion of a large amount of work accomplished by the NH Association of Counties began. The costs charged by the Dupont Group that provide administrative services to the organization were reviewed.

Superintendent Iosue was then recognized to discuss a Department of Corrections request for a bonus hiring program. Iosue provided the following information to the Commissioners.

From: Doug Iosue, Superintendent
Re: LPN Hiring bonus-cost-benefit analysis
Date: April 2, 2021

Introduction:

The DOC has, for many years, struggled to hire and retain LPNs. This is not unique to the DOC, the County, or even the State. Nurses are in demand and can often find higher compensation in other settings. In the past two years, we have made job offers to approximately 8 LPNs who subsequently declined the offer, citing "pay" as the primary reason. Similarly, we estimate that in the past two years, 2 LPNs have resigned due primarily to compensation.

The DOC is proposing to pay a hiring bonus of \$2,000 for an LPN who is hired on; paid out in 3 month increments over the first year of employment.

The pros and cons of using a hiring bonus at the DOC, as well as other County Departments, were discussed at the Commissioner's meeting on March 31, 2021. It was decided to revisit the question at the April 7th meeting after more thought and input.

At the DOC, there are costs associated with continuing to operate the Medical Department understaffed. Some of these costs are non-financial and include the impact on employee stress levels, job satisfaction, and morale and result in higher staff turnover rates in the Department. However, there are also economic costs as staffing the Department in a long-term way by relying on per diems and traveler nurses carries an additional fiscal cost. On average, we pay per diems at a rate of nearly \$4.00 per hour more, and traveler nurses are paid an average of \$32 more per hour.

Average hourly pay rates:

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

Regular LPN staff: \$22.84
Per Diem LPN staff: \$26.52
Traveler LPN: \$55.00

To complete an analysis of staffing expense, we examined average hours of per diem and traveler nurse staffing during the months of February and March (during which time the full-time LPN position remained unfilled).

Following is an analysis of staffing expense in two different scenarios:

Scenario 1: *If we cannot hire a FT LPN and need to continue our current over-reliance on per diem and/or traveling nurse(s); versus*

Scenario 2: *If we are able to hire a FT LPN, thereby decreasing our over-reliance on per diem and/or traveling nurse(s)*

SCENARIO 1: MONTHLY PROJECTION (Position unfilled)

Avg per diem hours = 384 per month

Avg per diem pay rate=\$26.52

1 month pay projected=384 hrs x \$26.52= \$10,184 (Annualized: \$122,204)

Avg traveler hours = 60 per month

Avg traveler pay rate=\$55.00

1 month total pay projected=60 hrs x \$55.00 =\$3,300 (Annual: \$39,600)

Avg total monthly expense: (per diems + travelers)= \$13,484

Avg projected annual expense = \$161,808

SCENARIO 2: MONTHLY PROJECTION: (FT LPN position filled)

In this scenario, we, of course, have to pay the full-time nurse wages, plus benefits; however, we reduce our over-reliance on per diem and traveler nurses.

*FT LPN pay: \$22.84 x 173.3 hrs/mos= \$3,958, plus 22% (benefits)= \$4,829 per month
(Annualized:= \$57,948)*

Avg per diem hours/month = 96 hrs, plus in this scenario the per diems would also pick up the 60 hours of traveler nurse time; for a total of 156 per diem hours per month

Avg per diem pay rate=\$26.52

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

1 month pay projected=156 hrs x \$26.52= \$4,137 (Annualized: \$49,645)
Avg total monthly expense: \$4,829 (FT LPN salary/fringe) + \$4,137 (per diem pay)= \$8,966
Avg projected annual expense = \$107,592

Projected Yearly savings: =\$161,808-\$107,592= \$54,212

Summary and Recommendations:

Nursing shortages are creating challenges nationally, locally, and certainly at the DOC for a number of years. This has resulted in the need to use per diems and traveler nurses excessively. This comes with many "costs," some measurable and some not. At a minimum, this analysis provides data that would strongly suggest that spending \$2,000 for one year on a hiring bonus that would hopefully allow us to hire a full-time regular LPN will be more than offset by savings from reduced reliance on per diem and traveler nurse staffing.

This data would suggest that not only is a Nurse hiring bonus cost-effective and advisable, but it would seem to justify serious consideration of increasing the compensation and pay rate of all our nursing staff. This, however, is a matter for discussion on another day.

Iosue spoke to the details and stated that the proposed program could, in the end, be less costly than hiring traveler nursing personnel daily. Trombly then said that the savings would probably not be realized at the rate anticipated as FICA costs, retirement, workers, and unemployment compensation plus healthcare costs for employees needed to be calculated into the mix.

The Commissioners endorsed the idea of implementing crisis bonus payments up to \$2,000.00 for one year of satisfactory employment based on a department's needs and the ability to justify awarding the bonus. HR, Finance, and the County Administrator will work on the program's details in the next few weeks.

May then handed out pins made by Sharona Ben Sorek, who is a Physical Therapist at Maplewood. The pins commemorate County employees' hard work and sacrifices that have been made during the COVID-19 pandemic. May said that Ms. Ben Sorek designed and paid for the pins from her own funds because she wanted to share her gratitude with everyone. The Commissioners and staff offered their thanks and commended Ben Sorek for her thoughtful gift.

Trombly was then recognized and discussed the possible receipt of Proshare funds for 2021. She said that a formula change is being made on the federal level to pay out monies to state nursing homes. She noted that Cheshire County is the Proshare two categories that receive higher

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

payouts than those in the Proshare one category. Although no decisions have been made, it is hoped that the County will receive the same funding as in the past two years.

Administrator Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report:

Coates said that a letter was sent to Cashvest to be able to begin the program that was authorized last month. Trombly noted that the Finance department is now able to allocate some resources to engage in the project.

Coates related that the federal inmate census is holding reasonably static, and the run rate is over the budgeted amount by almost \$400k year-to-date. He hopes that the trend continues as the extra monies can be used for special projects that inevitably pop up each year.

Old Business: None

New Business: Commissioner Englund asked questions about the automated external defibrillators (AED's) in the buildings and the number of employees certified in CPR. It was discussed that the AED's are inspected and tested regularly and that all of the Sheriff's deputies were CPR certified.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 03/31/2021 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.

General Discussion: None

At 11:42 AM Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d), Commissioner Englund moved to enter a non-public session to discuss 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. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

At 12:00 PM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, April 07, 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

At 12:01 PM, The Commissioners entered a non-meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) to discuss the 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.

At 12:12 PM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to reenter the public session.

At 12:13 PM, 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