

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, May 19, 2021
County Hall
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

Pursuant to Emergency Order #12 and 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, Conservation District Manager Littleton, ARPA Project Manager Pearson, 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 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:

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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 8:32, AM the Chair opened the meeting and recognized HR Director May, who asked the Commissioners to authorize a non-paid two-week non-FMLA leave-of-absence for an employee who has been with the County for fourteen years. **Following further explanation and discussion Commissioner Englund moved to approve the non-paid leave-of-absence and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Amanda Littleton was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #887: Conservation District - Semi-Annual Report. Littleton said that the Conservation District is celebrating 75 years of support to forest and farm viability

She stated that the Food Access programs have been very successful. The market expansion available for farmers through the use of Share Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars, a USDA program for fruit and vegetables, continues to grow, and the farms and

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food stamp recipients benefit. She said four additional farms and three other Community Shared Agriculture (CSA's), and some local farm stands now participate in the program. Littleton said that the newest participate is in Keene and is called Green Wagon farm. She explained that some CSA's are now offering half-shares for households with limited income and a veterans appreciation program that offers all veterans a \$20 voucher for the purchase of fruits and vegetables has been very well received.

Littleton explained that the Conservation District equipment rental and soil health program continues to be well utilized. Greenhouses are using a new soil steamer for disease management to control disease and pests. She said that an ongoing program for pollinator funding and integrated pest management to lower pesticide use is also very popular.

The Commissioner thanked Littleton for her report, and Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates reminded the Commissioners of the Friday meeting for the NH Association of Counties to be held on Friday. He said that everyone should have received an email with the agenda and Zoom call details.

Coates then asked Will Pearson to discuss the latest information on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Pearson said that new guidance from the Treasury was received approximately eight days ago, and the document is about 170 pages of information.

He explained that four categories are addressed, with the first one addressing the negative economic impact caused by COVID-19. He stated that this is the most informative section. Many of the uses and rules are substantially the same for ARPA as under the previous CARES act for the usage of the funds. He said that if the funds are targeted toward lower-income or minority communities, the funds are automatically presumed to be qualified usage.

He also stated that addressing health disparity issues in impacted population segments is also presumed to be a qualified use of the funding.

Pearson then said that the monies might be used to construct temporary medical facilities that respond to meeting needs caused by COVID-19, such as medical transportation.

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Also covered will be premium pay programs up to \$13 per hour for frontline workers (same as CARES).

He said that revenue loss issues in aggregate could be offset if the problems are specifically identified as being COVID-19 related.

Another focus of the funding is to enhance investments for broadband, water, wastewater, and other infrastructure improvements.

A discussion of setting up a County Facebook page was covered to provide county residents and businesses access to more information.

Coates then said that next week a presentation of the Past and Present for NH Retirement System would occur for the Commissioners to understand the challenges and progress that the State has been to ensure the financial integrity of the retirement system.

Coates said that a Thursday morning meeting with the Westmoreland select board would be attended by himself and state representatives Eaton and Berch. One topic that will be addressed is the River Road bridge issue. He invited the Commissioners to participate in the meeting if their schedules allowed.

Coates said that we had received notice that Keene Housing will not be moving forward with a request for Community Development Block Grant funding (CDBG) until January 2022 to rebuild their offices that were heavily damaged in a recent fire. He also said that the Hundred Nights Shelter group would move forward with their CDBG request, and a public hearing will take place on June 16th to consider the request.

Coates stated that a check for over \$16K was received from the national opiate settlement. He said that additional smaller funding amounts would be received in future payments scheduled to be made.

Coates then said that the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant to restore the Cupola is moving forward. Further value engineering is taking place before the request is submitted.

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Old Business: None

New Business: None

An extended discussion of the state of the Restorative Justice program began. It was determined that a meeting with the local Public Defenders office could be helpful to the Commissioners, and staff will coordinate the session in the next few weeks.

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 05/05/2021 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.

General Discussion:

10:15 AM Commissioner Englund moved to enter nonpublic session pursuant to 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 Clark seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of discussion in a nonpublic session, no decision was made, and no vote was taken.

At 10:18 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to reenter the public session.

10:19 AM Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II to discuss (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. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

As a result of discussion in a nonpublic session, no decision was made, and no vote was taken.

At 11:10 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to reenter the public session.

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

Minutes recorded by:
Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

Reviewed and submitted by:
T. Clark, Clerk