

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, August 11, 2021
County Hall
12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431

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; and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s):

At 8:39 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting and conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, and Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responding as "present."

At 8:39 AM, the Commissioners opened the floor for public comment and Department Head updates.

As there were none, Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report.

Coates said that thus far the week has been spent preparing for, and is then dealing with the changes authorized by the Delegation at Monday night's Delegation meeting.

A discussion of possible solar installations in the County began. The potential of using the rooftops at the Corrections Facility, 33 Winter St. Courthouse building as well as a number of possible locations in Westmoreland were discussed in some detail. The meeting with Revision solar that was held on Monday with Coates and Bouchard was also reviewed and the potential costs and return on investment was examined. Revision will draft some ideas and suggestions and will present them in the next few weeks.

Coates then discussed the recent Department Head meeting and said that the Premium pay discussion and the implementation of the program was very well received. He said that under the new pay rate schedules the lowest paid position in the county will rise from \$12.03 per hour to \$15.00 per hour, a \$2.97 per hour increase.

The cost of the first few years of the program will be covered mostly through federal monies under the federal premium pay program for COVID-9 from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and it will gradually transition over a four-year period to the County budget that will then have increased revenues to offset the cost. He said the revenue generated by billable services that the County is now engaged with such income from the federal inmate holds and Medicaid services that are provided by court diversion programs that are expanding significantly in the next few years will more than cover the projected costs.

The use of masks and the possible re-closing of County buildings to the public was discussed as a result of the large upswing in infections due to the recent Delta variant increases. As was done before, a 10% infection rate will be the threshold to restart the mask mandates and building closures.

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Coates then said that on Monday August 16th, State Senator Kahn will be hosting a meeting in Delegation Hall on the recent flooding in the County that will broadcast via Zoom. The County Delegation, municipalities and congressional and senatorial offices have invited to attend.

Coates said that the initial look at installing the Premium Pay program overlooked one area and that was a pay program for the Bailiff's who are paid through the County but they are reimbursed by the State Courts to the County. He said that this creates a unique situation where the Bailiffs can be considered both County and State employees but they are not part of the County budget. He said a solution towards equity for the positions was reached by providing a one-time bonus. The Sheriff spoke to the number of hours worked by the majority of the bailiff's and said that a majority of the bailiffs are part-time. Coates then said that a \$500.00 bonus for full-time or \$250.00 for part-time was calculated based on hours worked as being equitable.

Commissioner Wozmak stated that the bailiffs are State employees by statue and operate as county employee's only for pay purposes. He said that the important work they do shouldn't be overlooked under the Premium pay program and the one-time bonuses seem to satisfy the need for equity with the other staff members.

A discussion of what other counties are paying their court security personnel was covered in some depth and it was learned that only one County has a different pay program for bailiff's that is outside of the standard state reimbursements.

Following discussions, the Commissioners agreed unanimously to provide the bonuses to the bailiffs.

New Business: None

Old Business: None

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 08/04/2021 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 09:30 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter a 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.

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

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

At 10:54 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

At 10:55 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.

Minutes recorded by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
Terry Clark, Clerk