

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, August 25, 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, HR Director May, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s): Henry Herndon, Consultant to City of Lebanon, Clifton Below, Asst. Mayor, Lebanon City Council, and Samuel Golding, President, Community Choice Partners, Inc.

At 8:31 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting and conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, and Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responding as "present."

At 8:32 AM, the Commissioners opened the floor for public comment and Department Head updates. Superintendent Iosue spoke to an issue concerning representing the County for Correctional Officer certifications and the Commissioners sign a letter appointing Iosue to the certifying board of the NH Association of Counties who has the statue authority for County Correctional officer training and certifications.

At 8:34 AM the Master Agenda Item #908: Community Power Coalition of NH – Overview and Status and Joint Powers Agreement was taken-up for discussion.

Herndon, Below, and Golding presented an in-depth overview of the work completed since the inception of the electrical aggregation working group now known as Community Power Coalition of NH. A lengthy and through overview of the final drafts of the Joint Powers Agreements between municipalities, the results of a yearlong legislative process to expand the net metering cap, reconciling multiple stakeholder interests, controlling RSA's, and a pro forma business plan was covered in detail during a ninety-minute presentation to the Board of Commissioners.

Following a question-and-answer session on numerous aspects of the coalition, Commissioner Clark moved to join the Community Power Program of NH and to authorize the County Administrator to sign the Joint Powers Agreement. The motion seconded by Commissioner Englund and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Englund then move to nominate Commissioner Clark as the designated representative to CPCNH and Chris Coates as the designated alternate. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #909: Maplewood Premium Pay Program was then taken-up for discussion and Coates provided details of the pending Center for Disease Control mandate for fully vaccinated staff at nursing homes and the potential impact on staffing levels.

He said that up to fifty-seven current staff members may leave the employ of the County and it could greatly impact many of the operational activities of the facility.

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He then discussed an incentive a Premium Pay incentive plan that would be paid out at the end of the year and that could address some of the potential staff losses through incentive monies that would be covered by American Rescue Plan Act funds.

A discussion of the impact on staffing levels across all levels of the organization began and Trombly spoke to the funding sources that are available to support the proposed plan. She said that since it is a premium pay plan COVID funding can be used to cover the costs.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to implement the plan as proposed by the Administrator and Finance Director and the motion was seconded by Commissioner Clark and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

At 10:19 AM Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter a non-Public pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(c) to discuss matters which, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of this board, unless such person requests an open meeting. This exemption shall extend to include any application for assistance or tax abatement or waiver of a fee, fine or other levy, if based on inability to pay or poverty of the applicant.

Commissioner Englund seconded the motion and upon roll call vote he motion passed unanimously.

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

At 10:36 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

At 10:37 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.

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 11:48 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

At 11:54 AM Commissioner Wozmak left the meeting for a previous appointment.

Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations Report.

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Coates said the Keene Sentinel is writing an upcoming article on County programs and he spent considerable time with one of the reporters providing them many details and supporting information.

He then said that the cybersecurity scam that recently occurred in Peterborough has been picked-up in a notice from the County insurance company, Primex. A discussion of how the scam occurred and the checks in place at the County to prevent a like event in the County was covered. He followed-up saying that the notice from Primex and a link to an article in the Keene Sentinel on the incident was sent to the members of the County Delegation and to all twenty-three municipalities in the County to ensure that they were aware of the situation.

Coates then said that the City of Keene has approved the Hundred Night Shelter building for downtown Keene and that they are thus far having a successful funding raising to finance the project.

Coates then related a call with the CEO of Cheshire Medical concerning the growing hospitalization of Delta related COVID-19 infections and he said he was concerned by the trend as it continues upward. Coates said that based keeping the staff and public safe a county mask reinstatement for County buildings will be reimposed as early as next week.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 08/18/2021 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 12:06 PM, 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