

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, October 13, 2021
Cheshire County Department of Corrections
825 Marlboro Road, 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, Superintendent Iosue, Cheshire County Sheriff Eli Rivera, Chief Deputy Todd Faulkner, Safety Officer Julie Kroupa, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s): Mia Summerson, Keene Sentinel

At 8:32 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting, and Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responding as "present."

At 8:32 AM, the Commissioners opened the floor for public comment and Department Head updates.

Public Comment: None

County Administrator Coates then said he would move the Master Agenda Item #922: Sole Source Bid Request for Capital Item – K. Kindopp to accommodate the administrator's schedule later in the meeting.

At 8:33 AM, Coates addressed master agenda item #923: Body Camera system for Sheriff's Department. Coates then recognized Sheriff Eli Rivera.

Rivera thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to address them about body camera systems and understand why the Sheriff Department is seeking cameras. Rivera then introduced Chief Deputy Todd Faulkner.

Chief Deputy Faulkner said he had worked extensively in body camera systems. When he was Chief at Hinsdale Police Department, it was the first agency in the State to implement a body camera system. He has taught body-worn camera use for many years and has trained thousands of law enforcement personnel to use body camera systems.

There is a growing push nationwide for accountability in law enforcement. Law enforcement agencies need to earn public trust to gain the support of those they protect.

Faulkner said that Cheshire County's Sheriff Department is highly respected based on his experience with law enforcement agencies worldwide. Despite this, the County can anticipate that it will experience significant incidents and must be prepared for them.

Faulkner said that he spoke to the IT Director about the costs to store and manage the recordings, and it is calculated that on-site storage with redundant server and backup is about \$15,000 and a \$600 annual fee for licensing. He said that the online camera systems are far more capable and much less expensive

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Maintaining Legitimacy

- 2017 Pew Research Institute found that 93% of the public favor the use of body worn cameras by police
- 66% say police would be more likely to act appropriately when wearing BWCs
- BWC can establish an entire recording of the events and not a selected version from a cell phone video

Potential Benefits of BWCs

- Better Transparency
 - Video has proven effective to help resolve civil unrest and questioning of a critical incident
- Increased Civility
 - Increased rates of compliance
 - Decrease rates of complaints
 - Assists in keeping events from escalating to a force incident

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Potential Benefits of BWCs

- **Quicker Resolution**
 - Helps lead to faster resolution of citizen complaints and lawsuits
 - Investigations of inconsistent accounts of an encounter from officers and citizens are often found to be “not substantiated” when not video recorded
 - This decreases public trust
 - The availability allows for a faster resolution and understanding of the reasoning by the complainant when video is present

Cons to the Program

- Expensive to Implement and maintain
- Requires additional work assignments by current staff
- If data is stored and managed in-house will require daily management of data (new and old)
- Additional training component for all deputies
- Adherence to RSA 105
- Judicial discovery requirements
- Potential for increased 91-A requests/hearings

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Commissioner Wozmak expressed concern about the overall costs, and a general discussion of what it takes to purchase, implement, and maintain the units began.

The Sheriff said that more quotes are to be received in the next few days and that he would share the findings with the staff and Commissioners when they arrive.

The Commissioners expressed appreciation for the presentation, and at 9:29 AM, Coates addressed master agenda item #0924 – The semi-annual report of the County Safety Officer. Coates then recognized County Safety Officer Julie Kroupa.

Kroupa provided the following written report and discussed each item with the Commissioners.

Listed below is a summary of the current and ongoing projects for the 2nd and 3rd quarters of 2021.

Currently working to create a Safety Policy Manual. Many policies have been completed and more to come. Books are being distributed to the facilities.

Ongoing management of the Worker's Compensation and the Temporary Alternative Duty program. Programs are current with the compensation process and are in compliance.

Working closely with our insurance company, PRIMEX, benchmarks are set every year to assist in areas that need strengthening. 2020 Benchmarks are: Average number of claims under 34 (2019:28; 2020:21, 2021:18), Average number of material handling/resident transfer claims under 13 (2019:6; 2020:8, 2021:3) and Average number of Slip/Trip/Fall claims under 5 (2019:3; 2020:3, 2021:6).

Renewed the annual PRIMEX PRIME3 Certification for 2021 and received a 2.5% discount for Worker's Compensation and 2.5% discount for Property and Liability toward 2021.

DHHS Life Safety Survey of Maplewood Assisted Living and Nursing Home was Deficiency Free.

Coordinate the required DOL annual inspections of all County-Owned facilities. The Cheshire County Joint Loss Management Committee and the Campus Safety Committees are responsible for inspections of their buildings and reporting deficiencies to the Safety Officer. Inspection reports are written, work orders placed and reports submitted to each department for review/resolution. Inspections are ongoing.

Develop the agendas, create and distribute all the meeting minutes for the Maplewood Safety Committee, Keene Safety Committee, Department of Corrections Safety Committee (new as of 2021) and the Cheshire County Joint Loss Management Committee.

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Continue to train MNH employees on the new Disaster Plan along with ongoing testing of the plan, including updating policies as needed. Changes are distributed quarterly.

Conducted a Table Top Drill to test the Maplewood Disaster Policy for a Dr. Richard's Event (threatening visitor). Coordination with all departments and Sheriff's office.

Currently planning a Live Bomb Threat Drill at Maplewood in the next month. This will include all departments, the Sheriff's Office, and the NH State Police.

Annual Safety Training for DOC completed for 2021. Maplewood does annual/new employee training every two weeks ongoing. Annual Safety Training for Keene Campus almost complete, waiting on a few make-ups.

Fire drills were held in accordance with state and local regulations for Maplewood and Keene Campus. DOC handles their fire drills internally.

Fire Extinguisher Training for Maplewood Employees is underway.

Completed all emergency equipment inspections and replaced items as needed- completed on a weekly/monthly schedule.

2021 Annual MNH Bed Entrapment Survey Completed.

Continue to maintain an active role in the Greater Monadnock Public Health Network, the Granite State Health Care Coalition, Regional Planning Committee, Healthcare Emergency Preparedness Alliance, the Healthcare Workforce Group and the Public Health Emergency Coordinating Committee. Will be pursuing MACE training. Some of these committees are still on hold from the pandemic.

Ensure all the MNH Transportation department drivers who transport residents have current safe driving records and/or defensive driving certificates on file.

Working to meet employee's ergonomic needs with the review of workstations, adding ergonomic devices and new furniture.

Member of the committee that organizes employee Health Fairs and Wellness Initiatives at MNH and Keene Campus.

Ongoing fit testing of all nursing staff at Maplewood for N95 masks to provide protection from Covid-19.

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Kroupa then presented the following statistics for Workers Compensation to date.

As of September 30, 2021

Claims to Date: 17 (21 as of 9/30/2020)

9: Department of Corrections
0: Sheriff
2: MNH Nursing
1: MNH Administration
2: Environmental Services
1: MNH Dietary
1: MNH Activities
1: MNH Facilities

Lost work days: 349* (229 2020) Light Duty Days: 142 (224 2019)

<u>Gender:</u> 9 – Female	<u>Shift:</u> 10– 7:00-3:00
8 - Male	3 – 3:00-11:00
	3– 11:00-7:00
	1- 4:00-12:00
	0- 12:00-8:00

Day of Week:

3- Sunday
2- Monday
4 - Tuesday
2- Wednesday
3- Thursday
1- Friday
2 – Saturday

**One employee required surgery and was out for 105 days and another employee had multiple/recurring injuries from the same incident over the last two years and was out 196 days just this year.*

Commissioner Englund asked about the status of two long-term employee absences in the past year mentioned by Kroupa. She reported that one was terminated, and one is back to work.

Wozmak asked about the method of fitness testing used on the N95 masks. Kroupa replied that a spray is used on the mask, and if the nurse can smell or taste the spray, the mask leaks.

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Coates noted that meetings with Primex are not happening as frequently and asked if that is because of COVID. Kroupa reported that the new person she deals with at Primex is very different from the person she used to deal with, and he does not reach out as often. Coates spoke positively about Primex meetings of the past and how he learned a great deal at each meeting. Kroupa said she would reach out to the new person.

9:39 AM Commissioner Wozmak left the meeting to receive an important phone call.

At 9:40 AM, Coates addressed master agenda item #922: Sole Source Bid Request for Capital Item. Kindopp **requested a sole source bid request for capital acquisition of a wheelchair washer** that was initially approved in 2020 based on a 2019 budget request for \$6,020.

Because the cost is over \$5,000 and must be submitted to a bid process, she is asking for sole source exemption because the vendor for this machine is the only manufacturer of the equipment. She asked the Commissioners to accept a sole source bid HubScrub.

Following a short discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the sole source bid and accept HubScrub as the exclusive source provider for this project. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon vote, the motion passed 2-0 (Commissioner Wozmack was unavailable for this vote as he was still on the phone call from 9:39 AM)

At 9:41 AM, Commissioner Wozmak rejoined the meeting.

At 9:44 AM, Coates addressed the County Administrator's report.

Coates updated the Commissioners on efforts to address potential staffing issues that could dramatically affect the County based on potential state vaccine mandates. He said the County has sought and waited for guidance from Medicaid services, but none has been forthcoming. He expressed his concern that some employees may choose to leave their jobs rather than be vaccinated and that he wants to be proactive and get ahead of a potentially troubling staffing situation.

Coates has met with staff to devise strategies to deal with these potential shortages, and ideas have included working with current vendors to expand their cleaning, laundry, and food service services.

Coates said that a lack of available, affordable housing for nurse travelers is becoming a crisis and threatens the County's ability to deliver needed care. He cited the current issue of nurses who may leave due to a lack of available housing. Coates and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard have explored potential opportunities for apartment leases in the County.

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Commissioner Wozmak suggested potentially buying a property instead of leasing. Coates closed by telling Commissioners that the County will be aggressive on this issue, and he will continue to keep Commissioners informed on this topic.

Coates said 18 towns have now sent applications for ARPA grants, and staff is moving to get checks out. Commissioner Wozmak asked if any towns had not responded yet, and Coates said response is not the issue now, but that some towns have simple logistical issues like getting required signatures, etc. The process is just difficult and slow.

Coates updated Commissioners on his phone call with the New Hampshire Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Lori Shibinette. He said they had a very positive conversation on several topics and that Shibinette praised the County throughout the discussion. Shibinette highlighted the County's Handyman Program that helps prepares homes of hospital-bound patients with needed improvements like structural modifications (i.e., ramps for wheelchairs) and weatherization. Shibinette told Coates that HHS had just started strategic planning and hoped to take this program statewide. He told Shibinette the Commissioner also discussed utilizing existing staff at the County jail to disburse selected medications and said there has to be a way to get staff medically certified for this task. Shibinette told Coates she does not see why this cannot be done and will take it back to her staff and respond.

Coates briefed Commissioners on the recent state redistricting meetings hosted by the County. The function was well-attended but without much comment. Under current proposals, New Hampshire would move from 23 state representatives to 22, but state officials offered no plan for what precisely that would look like. Coates told Commissioners the State has no plan for the County or State right now and that this event was part of a listening tour. Coates said he feels state legislators will come together, make a plan, then tell the counties what they're going to do. He called process disingenuous. He added that the Governor vetoed a plan to have a non-partisan group look at redistricting.

Coates wanted to be sure all Commissioners received invitations to the Monadnock Region Food Access Forum. He will re-send invitations.

Coates told Commissioners that Mark Singer of Recover Care contacts the County each year to see if it wants to sell its nursing home. Coates said he thanked Mr. Singer but said no. He wanted to keep Commissioners informed.

Coates said he would be presenting to the City of Keene's Finance Committee regarding the downshifting of costs by the State. A general discussion took place about cost-shifting. Coates cited legislation (HB 1 and HB 2) used by the Legislature to downshift costs and the apparent frustration this creates for cities and counties. Commissioner Wozmak said the state budget would have to increase and that someone will have to have the courage to say so.

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Old business: The process for nonpublic meeting minutes was discussed.

New business: None

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 10/06/2021 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Englund moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmack. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.

General Discussion: None

At 10:28 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to enter a nonpublic 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 nonpublic session, no decision was made, and no vote was taken.

At 11:08 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to return to the public session.

At 11:10 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:
J. Minahan, Transcriptionist

Reviewed and edited by:
R. Bouchard, Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
Terry Clark, Clerk