

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, December 01, 2021
County Hall Building
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, Grants Manager Bansley, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.

Guest(s):

At 8:30 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting, and Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, Wozmak and Clark, responding as "present."

At 8:31 AM, the Commissioners opened the floor for public comment and Department Head updates.

Public Comment: None

At 8:31 AM, Commissioner Englund joined the meeting.

Bansley was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #938: EDA FY 2021 ARPA Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Competitive Tourism Grant Application. She explained the purpose of the grant and spoke to the need for the Commissioners to authorize the application for the Monadnock Tourism Development Project.

An extended discussion of marketing needs for the Monadnock regional area began, and many aspects of the past problems and issues for attracting tourists and visitors to the area began. How this grant is different from previous development grants and efforts on the state level were discussed at length.

Following discussions, Commissioner Clark moved to approve the submission of the application, and if awarded, to accept the grant and its terms and conditions, authorize County Administrator Christopher C. Coates to sign a letter of support, and appoint Suzanne Bansley as the authorized certifying official. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

A further conversation around how to promote the region through the press and publications was then had.

Coates was then recognized for the Weekly Operations report.

Coates said that the COVID-19 infection positivity rate at the Cheshire Medical Center (CMC) was 16.1% last week and is 19% for this week. The impact on CMC hospital services was discussed, and it was learned that there are no ICU beds available in the entire state at this time.

The Commissioners then discussed the impact on the County to date and what the new Omicron variant may mean to the area. The following information was discussed.

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From USA Facts: <https://usafacts.org/visualizations/covid-vaccine-tracker-states/state/new-hampshire>

- New Hampshire has received 2,626,110 doses so far, administering 81% or 2,133,848 of the doses.
- In New Hampshire, 1,188,240 people, or 87.39% of the population, have received at least one dose.
- Overall, 880,356 people, or 64.75% of New Hampshire's population, have been fully vaccinated.

Coates then addressed the federal court's decision to put into place an injunction against the Center for Medicare and Medicaid mandate for mandatory vaccination of health care employees.

An in-depth discussion of the results of not having vaccinated staff and the public was covered in detail. The effect on the nursing home and the Department of Corrections was specifically addressed.

Coates then said that in January, the City of Keene will be hosting a delegation meeting in Delegation Hall to address the issue of unfunded mandates and cost-shifting by the state. Several State Representatives and State Senators will be invited to join the discussions.

Coates then reminded the Commissioners that the Commissioners meeting will be at the Department of Corrections next week and that there will be a Correctional Officers Certification graduation following the meeting.

Coates remarked that in a meeting with Senator Shaheen's office, it was learned that a previously requested \$750K earmark for the Sheriff's department is still viable. He said that two other local earmarks are also still pending, and if all three are awarded, over \$2M of funds could be available to the local area.

Coates said that two other counties have reached out to us for copies of the paperwork developed to disperse \$1m of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds back to the towns in Cheshire county. More counties have expressed interest in how the program worked in Cheshire and will be followed by the county APRA manager.

Old Business: Coates related that the meeting with the Deputy Commissioner of the State Department of Health and Human Services regarding billing issues and other procedural problems is still being reviewed. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled in the near future.

New Business: None

Consent Agenda: Minutes of 11/24/2021 and Manifests for the week. Commissioner Wozmak moved the consent agenda and was seconded by Commissioner Englund. The motion passed with unanimous consent upon roll call vote.

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General Discussion – Commissioner Wozmak said that about 35-40 applications had been received for the pending EMS department start-up. A discussion of how the onboarding process will work was covered.

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.

Recorded and edited by:
R. Bouchard
Assistant County Administrator

Reviewed and submitted by:
Terry Clark
Clerk, Board of Commissioners