



County of Cheshire

12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431
www.co.cheshire.nh.us

**TO: Members of the Cheshire County Delegation,
Selectmen of the Towns in the County and Mayor of the City of Keene**

FROM: The Cheshire County Board of Commissioners

DATE: November 20, 2020

SUBJECT: Commissioners' Proposed 2021 Budget

Enclosed is your copy of the Cheshire County Board of Commissioners Proposed Budget for 2021. The commissioners will present the budget and take questions during a public hearing on Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:15 PM on the second floor of Cheshire County Hall, 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431. This meeting will also be held virtually pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04. The Zoom meeting information can be found at the end of this letter.

As the impact of the COVID 19 endures, the commissioners are fully aware and understand that the residents of Cheshire County continue to feel the devastating ramification that this pandemic has had on our health and economic structures.

The commissioners understand that without another supplemental CARES Aid Package the fiscal constraints and concerns could be with us for the foreseeable future.

With the potential fiscal realities due to the pandemic in mind the, commissioners along with senior leadership within the county have worked exhaustively to lessen the impact of the county's portion of taxes for our 20201 Cheshire County Budget.

The total of the 2021 proposed budget is \$55,959,044. This figure represents a decrease of \$7,320,703 (11.57%) from 2021. The major decrease is due to the full bond amount for 33 Winter Street that was voted on in the 2020 budget for \$6,950,000.00.

The proposed taxes of \$29,074,333, represents an increase of \$355,962 (1.24%) from 2020.

During our review of the department budgets, we made reductions to expense requests totaling \$236,330 and increased revenues by \$2,638,380.

Although changes to the budget were made during our review, some increases were difficult to contain such as the increase to the New Hampshire Retirement System rates for the employer contribution. As of July 1, 2021 the employer contribution percentages for Group I will go from 11.17% to 14.06% and Group II from 28.43% to 33.88%. With normal wage increases and the

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♦ **County Commissioners** 352-8215/Fax 355-3026 ♦ **Registry of Deeds** 352-0403/Fax 352-7678 ♦ **Finance Department** 355-0154/Fax 355-3000 – 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 ♦ **County Sheriff** 352-4238/Fax 355-3020 ♦ **County Attorney** 352-0056/Fax 355-3012 – 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 ♦ **Alternative Sentencing/Mental Health Court** 355-0160/Fax 355-0159 – 33 West St. Keene N.H. ♦ **Department of Corrections** 825 Marlboro Street, Keene, 03431 - 903-1600/Fax 352-4044 ♦ **Maplewood Nursing Home & Assisted Living** 399-4912/Fax 399-7005 - TTY Access 1-800-735-2964 ♦ **Facilities** 399-7300/Fax 399-7357 ♦ **Human Resources** 399-7317/399-7378/Fax 399-4429 - 201 River Rd, Westmoreland, NH 03467



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higher percentages that go into effect on July 1 the employer cost of NHRS expenses has increased by \$438,568. In addition, normal wage increase for 2021 as well as higher overtime c and Nursing Registry use to fill staffing needs at Maplewood account for increases of approximately \$800,000.

Although a relatively small total increase, the Commissioners have proposed increased funding to some of the existing agencies.

The Commissioners have unanimously supported an increase of funding to Home Healthcare Hospice and Community Services (HCS). HCS is essential in our community to provide care to acute, as well as those with chronic illnesses, so that they can remain safe and independent at home. These services clearly prevent or delay placement in a hospital or long-term care facility. Earlier this year, the need for these services outpaced the availability of HCS Home Support Services providers, resulting in a waiting list of 140 residents. Some of those on a waiting list were also unable to gain admission to Maplewood Nursing home due to our own staffing issues as well as on-going construction. One hundred and forty of our citizens should not be at such risk in the community. The Commissioners feel that it is our longstanding obligation to provide assistance to the infirm in the community, particularly because of the increasing numbers of elderly in our region. For these reasons, we support a \$10,000 increase to their appropriation.

In addition the Commissioners have supported an increase of \$11,000 to Monadnock Developmental Services. With the current number of families being impacted by COVID -19 and the higher number of respite services needed during this time the increase in their funding request was supported to assist these families in need.

Although we have increased funding for the outside agencies to handle serious and growing local issues, in our overall budget, the impact of \$21,000 is almost invisible. We look forward to your support to become a stronger partner as we seek to care for those less fortunate than ourselves.

We are pleased with the efforts of our department managers and elected officials as they recognize the pressure to minimize this year more so than ever before due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. Their fiscal responsibility will lessen the impact on the taxpayer and allows the county to meet its obligation to provide necessary and essential services to the citizens of the County.

As you may know the Commissioners proposed budget is reviewed by the Executive Committee of the Delegation which then makes its own proposal to the Delegation of Cheshire County State Representatives. The Commissioners look forward to working closely with the Executive Committee of the Delegation for their review of the department and elected official's budgets. These reviews typically occur during the month of January and February.

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During the meeting on December 7, 2019, the Executive Committee will determine a tentative schedule for these reviews. Once the Executive Committee reviews are finalized, they will present their budget to the full Delegation for final approval.

The Board of Commissioners looks forward to answering any questions you may have at the public hearing on December 7, 2019 at 7:00 PM at County Hall, 12 Court Street, Keene.

If attending in person, please make certain that a mask is worn and recognize that temperature screening will be done. If you would like to participate by Zoom please use the information below.

Zoom Call-in Number 1-646-558-8656
Meeting ID: 409 748 8803
Pin# 6031233

Very truly yours,

CHESHIRE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Chuck Weed Commissioner Jack Wozmak Commissioner Robert Englund

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