

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, April 27, 2022**  
**County Hall Building**  
**12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03341**

**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, Sheriff Rivera, Superintendent Iosue, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.  
Guest(s): Terry Johnson, Senior Project Manager, Southwest Regional Planning Commission; Christine Allen, and Lisa Steadman, Monadnock Peer Support.

At 09:02 AM, Commissioner Wozmak opened the meeting, and Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call with the Commissioners, Wozmak, Englund, and Clark, responding as "present."

Public Comments

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made, not to exceed three (3) minutes in length. No comments were received.

Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

To receive, as informational, departmental updates requiring Commissioner review, participation, approval, and impactful departmental and operational issues.

Rivera was recognized and said that the civil portion of the radio project was now underway. He said that the job description for the radio technician that was authorized to be hired was posted and will be pursued over the next few weeks.

Iosue was then recognized and provided a summary of information from a meeting with HR, Finance, the Superintendent, and the County Administrator concerning the program being developed to hire and retain employees. As a follow-up to last week's Commissioner meeting, the following temporary programs have been put into place based on the meeting with the Director of Human Resources, the Director of Finance, and the County Administrator.

- ◆ Overtime shifts will be paid at time and half, plus a \$3.00 per hour bonus. This will be delivered to any staff member picking up an overtime shift, either voluntarily or by mandatory coverage selection.
- ◆ A \$2,000 hiring bonus has been established, and the scheduled payouts will be determined shortly.
- ◆ A recruitment or referral bonus of \$300 is now in place for a staff member who identifies someone hired into a regular open position.
- ◆ A stipend program of \$1,000 will be created to retain existing staff. Several details will need to be worked out, but the program is required for existing staff recognition, retention, and appreciation.

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An extended discussion and review of staffing hiring, retention, and development began and will continue for the foreseeable future. The wide-ranging conversation covered compensation, training, the needs of various departments of the County, and several issues affecting retention.

**Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to approve a \$1,000 stipend for existing DOC staff to be paid out in increments and timing to be determined by the Superintendent, the Director of Finance, and the County Administrator. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion and upon roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.**

**Scheduled Items**

Terry Johnson of SWRPC was then recognized to discuss Master Agenda Item #984: CDBG ARPA Community Facilities application. He discussed the Monadnock Peer Support (MPS) project to renovate a facility for respite care and requested sponsorship for the CDBG ARPA Community Facilities application.

He spoke to the application for 3.5M dollars of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding from the ARPA assigned Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding. The sub-recipient is the Monadnock Peer Support group for the renovation of a facility that offers respite non-clinical services.

Christine Allen and Lisa Steadman of MPS spoke at length about nutrition, yoga, mental health, and over 50 other programs offered each week at the facility. The current respite program with only two beds was discussed, as were step-up (mental health-focused) and step-down programs (primarily jail release and re-integration into the community), as were many other peer support programs offered by the facility. As of July 1, six additional beds for individuals who need extra help for dealing with mental health issues and who need extra support will be available.

Allen said that the proposed upgrades would help turn the building into a true community center for County residents experiencing a personal crises.

Coates restated that this program does not attach Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from the state Community Development Authority (CDA) program that the County administers for economic and workforce development. It is a separate fund made available through the American Recuse Plan Act (ARPA) that will be used.

It was then stated that if the Commissioners agreed to move forward, a public hearing would be scheduled in a few weeks for the request.

**The Commissioner agreed unanimously to entertain the request, and SWRPC will schedule the hearing for May.**

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HR Director May was then recognized for Master Agenda Item #982: Semi-Annual Report of Human Resources.

Director May was recognized and presented the following report to the Commissioners.

Human Resources Activity 9/01/21 – 3/31/2022

**Total Hires: 71**

Keene - 12

- County Attorney – 1 (Assistant County Attorney)
- Keene Administration – 2 (1 Minute Taker, 1 Consultant)
- Grants Program – 1 (Grants Assistant)
- Drug Court – 1 (Recovery Coach)
- Sheriff's Office – 3 (Bailiff, Deputy, Dispatcher)
- System of Care – 4 (Care Coordinator)

Department of Corrections - 16

- Corrections Officers – 12
- Nurse – 3
- Cook - 1

Maplewood - 43

- Receptionist – 2
- Assisted Living – 3 (Personal Care Attendant)
- Dietary – 12 (1 Evening Supervisor, 11 Dietary Aides)
- EVS – 9 (1 Laundry Aide, 8 Housekeeping Aides)
- Nursing – 17 (6 Ward Aides, 9 LNAs, 2 RNs)

**Total Terms: 72**

Keene - 8

- ARPA Assistant – 1
- Drug Court – 2 (MLADC, Clinical Coordinator)
- Administration – 1 (Minute Taker)
- Sheriff's Office – 4 (2 Secretary, 2 Bailiff)

Department of Corrections - 14

- Corrections Officers - 10
- Nurse – 3
- Cook - 1

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Maplewood - 50

Activities - 1 (Recreational Aide)  
Administration – 1 (Receptionist)  
Assisted Living – 4 (Personal Care Attendant)  
Dietary – 9 (1 Baker, 1 Cook, 1 Evening Supervisor, 6 Dietary Aides)  
EVS – 14 (13 Housekeeping Aide, 1 Laundry Aide)  
Nursing – 19 (10 Ward Aides, 8 LNAs, 1 Nurse)  
Rehab – 2 (1 Speech Therapist, 1 Physical Therapist)

- Some of the reasons for Maplewood’s resignations are as follows:
  - ✓ COVID Vaccine mandate - 5
  - ✓ School/Military - 4
  - ✓ Unable to return after medical leave - 4
  
- Maplewood was unable to hold an LNA class as we did not have enough students to warrant a class – we did send 1 Ward Aide through a Hybrid program and had plans to send 1 Housekeeping Aide through a Hybrid class in June.
- Hiring during the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be challenging to say the least.
- We are currently offering a \$2,000 sign-on bonus at Maplewood for any LNA, Dietary Aide, or Housekeeper hired. This is paid out as follows: \$500 at 3 months, \$500 at 6 months, and \$1,000 at 1 year for a 40-hour/week employee - prorated for part-time.
- We are in a staffing crisis with regard to LNAs - we are currently using more agency/traveler staff than we ever have before. We are also using an outside agency for Housekeeping at Maplewood to cover the ground and first floor.

An extended conversation concerning healthcare education began, and the many issues surrounding education and certification and the difficulty of complying with outdated and onerous state training and regulations began.

The search for the Chief of the new County EMS department and other positions was discussed for the pending startup of the department in early fall.

The Commissioners thanked May for her report and then took-up Master Agenda Item #983: Signing of Proposed Budget and Estimate of Revenue – County Department of Revenue Administration form MS-46

Trombly was recognized and presented the MS-46 document for review and signature. **Following a short discussion, the Commissioners signed the document, and it will be sent to the state Department of Revenue Administration.**

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**County Administrator**

Weekly Operations Report - The County Administrator will update the Commissioners on activities that have taken place since the previous meeting.

Coates said State Senator Kahn sent his appreciation to the County for the grant given to the Community Kitchen for the mobile food pantry.

Coates then said that eight residents, six on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and two on the second floor, tested positive for COVID-19. The positive residents have been moved to the third floor COVID-19 isolation unit.

Coates mentioned the letter in the Sentinel concerning the EMS department. He and Wozmak will be on a local radio program tomorrow morning to discuss the topic.

Coates said that he was contacted by a local drug recovery program seeking monies to develop a recovery coach training and education curriculum to help solve a shortage of support personnel. Meetings will be set up.

Coates then related a meeting that he had with the Keene Director of Public Works, Kurt Blumquist, concerning creating a document that covers how the City of Keene and County work together.

Coates then said that he would attend a meeting with Westmoreland select board on May 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 PM. Commissioners Wozmak and Clark indicated that they will also participate.

Lastly, Coates said that a house in Westmoreland that was looked at to provide housing for the traveling nurses assigned to Maplewood did not work as hoped because of costs.

**Old Business**

Bouchard stated that the generator maintenance contract approved at last week's meeting can be extended to a five-year term with the price frozen at the agreed first-year pricing level. The contract specifies only a thirty (30) day written notification of termination by either party if we were not pleased with the work or wished to republish an RFP for services.

**Following discussion, it was agreed that a yearly RFP for the maintenance agreement would be advertised to ensure we are getting the best coverage at the competitive pricing. Commissioner Englund moved to accept the proposal, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

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**New Business:** None

**Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of April 20, 2022. Commissioner Englund moved to approve the consent agenda items, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

**Calendar**

Action Expected: To accept the calendar as informational and to make necessary changes/additions.

**General Discussion for Commissioners**

Master Agenda Item #673: Commissioners - State Cost Shifting Letter and Restorative Justice Program

**Nonpublic Sessions:** None

**Adjournment**

Recorded and edited by:  
R. Bouchard  
Assistant County Administrator

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