

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, June 29, 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, Grants Manager Bansley, Maplewood Administrator Kindopp, HR Director May, Conservation District Manager Littleton, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard.  
**Guest(s):** Terry Johnson, Senior Project Manager; Andrew Smeltz, Planner, Southwest Regional Planning; Christine Allen, executive director of Monadnock Peer Support Agency

**At 8:30 AM, Commissioner Englund opened the meeting, Administrator Coates took a roll call of the Commissioners, and Commissioners Wozmak, Englund, and Clark responded as “present.”**

**I. 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 public comments were received.**

**II. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates**

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

May was recognized and asked for a non-FLMA leave of absence for an employee at the nursing home. **Following a short discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to grant the leave of absence, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**III. Scheduled Items**

Master Agenda Item #997: Maplewood - Bids on Replacement of Kitchen Steamer - K. Kindopp

**Action Expected: To receive and approve a request from the Nursing Home Administrator to replace the kitchen steamer.**

**Kindopp briefly spoke of the initially approved funding of \$19K for purchasing the steamer. She said that the actual lowest price came in at \$22K.**

Company	Steamer name	Price	S&H	Total
<b>Singer Kittredge</b>	<b>Cleveland Range</b>	<b>\$22,190.00</b>	<b>included</b>	<b>\$22,190.00</b>
Singer Kittredge	Vulcan	\$27,347.64	included	\$27,347.64
Webstaurant Stover	Cleveland Range	\$27,655.80	included	\$27,655.80

**Following a short discussion, Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept the request for extra funds and motioned to accept the recommendation of the Nursing Home**

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**Administrator to acquire the steamer. Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #998: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Public Facilities – Application Hearing for Monadnock Peer Support.

**Action Expected: Conduct an application public hearing to allow the public to comment on the CDBG grant application for up to \$750,000 for Monadnock Peer Support's project to renovate a facility for respite care.**

**At 8:37 AM, The Chair opened the first public hearing to discuss the Community Development Block Grant Application.**

Commissioner Wozmak read the opening information and then Terry Johnson, Senior Project Manager with Southwest Region Planning Commission, was recognized and explained that CDBG funds are available to municipalities and counties on a competitive basis for projects that primarily benefit low- and moderate-income persons. Cheshire County is eligible to receive up to \$500,000 per program year in public facilities, housing, economic development, microenterprise technical assistance, and emergency grants. Feasibility study funds are also available for up to \$25,000 annually. Johnson also explained that for this round, up to \$750,000 CDBG Coronavirus funds are being made available for eligible public facilities and housing projects that respond to the COVID-19 pandemic due to state appropriations from the CARES Act of 2020. Johnson provided a handout describing the NH Community Development Block Grant Program eligible activities that included the area HUD income limits.

Johnson also provided a project handout. The proposed application to the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) is for \$750,000 to be subgranted, with fewer administration costs, to Monadnock Peer Support Agency (MPS). The CDBG funds will be used for facility renovations at Monadnock Peer Support Agency headquarters at 32-34 Washington St. Keene, NH.

Activities in the proposed application will improve and enhance the capacity of MPS to provide peer support and mental health services to clients from Keene and surrounding communities in Cheshire County. Activities will also offer more significant safety measures to guard against COVID-19, improve accessibility for those with disabilities, and better energy efficiency at the MPS facility. The project's low- and moderate-income benefit is up to 90% and will directly benefit individuals with mental health challenges. 50% of beneficiaries are homeless.

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**The presentation was then temporally suspended due to the director of the project was not available to address questions but was expected to join the meeting shortly.**

In the interim, at 8:39 AM, Master Agenda Item #999: Semi-Annual Report – Cheshire County Conservation District was taken up for discussion by Littleton.

**Action Expected: To receive as informational the semi-annual report from the District Manager, Cheshire County Conservation District.**

Littleton was then recognized and spoke about several projects that the Conservation District is involved with this year and discussed the acquisition of a new soil steamer. She said that the USDA provided the funds for the unit, explained the use of the device, and said that it is popular and saves many hours of labor for the farms.

She said the District Office in Walpole would move next year and that she is very grateful for the storage space for the farm equipment at the old jail site in Westmoreland. A further discussion of options for funding to expand the storage began.

Littleton then spoke about the food access programs that offer 50% discounts for low-income individuals who can get half-price vegetables and the farmers who are compensated at their full price for their produce. Some funding is through State and USDA, but most funds come from private foundation funding. She mentioned that veterans are also included in the low-cost program.

She said that rain gardens and pollinator habitats are also being developed, and these are aimed at improving water quality.

Commissioner Wozmak asked about the impact of the Ukraine war on fertilizer, seed, and other farming costs. Littleton said that the effect is very hard on small farmers, but there are not any federal programs to help offset expenses thus far.

The Commissioners thanked Littleton for her presentation and commended her on achieving her fifteenth work anniversary with the County.

**At 8:58 AM**, the CDBG hearing resumed, and Johnson introduced Christine Allen, executive director of Monadnock Peer Support Agency, who provided the following details about the proposed project. Allen said the grant was requested because they cannot continue to serve the population that has been traditionally supported at their current facility. She said a new HVAC and windows are needed, as is a new elevator to access both floors and an interior staircase. She said that a wheelchair ramp and

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automatic doors for handicap access were also needed to meet code requirements. She explained that the exterior staircase needs to be repaired or replaced along with the roof, and external access is also required. Allen said that the roof exposures are conducive to solar panels and are also requested in the funding. She outlined several other modifications to the building, including adding additional laundry space, meeting space, and a rec center to be added to the first floor. She stated that the total project cost is projected at \$720K.

Commissioner Wozmak asked questions about the use of the center, and Allen explained who used the facility and outlined the type of clients served. She said that eleven (11) residents are currently at the facility.

Commissioner Clark asked about the timeline involved and said that if the project is funded, it should start by the end of the year. He noted that funders typically view mental health centers for low- and moderate-income people very favorably.

The Chair then opened the floor to public comment on the project, and none was received.

**Commissioner Englund moved to approve the submittal of the application and vote to authorize County Administrator Christopher Coates or County Commissioner Chair John Wozmak as the Authorized Designees to sign and submit the CDBG application and, upon approval of the CDBG application, authorize the Authorized Designee to execute any documents which may be necessary to effectuate the CDBG contract—seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Wozmak moved to close the Public Hearing on the Projects portion of the CDBG Block Grant Application Hearing. Commissioner Englund seconded it. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**At 9:17 AM, Commissioner Wozmak moved to open the second public hearing regarding the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Commissioners Englund seconded it. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Terry Johnson of SWRPC explained that if any permanent displacement takes place as a result of this project, the Uniform Relocation Act must be followed, which requires that any permanently displaced household or business in a project using federal funds must be

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found comparable housing in a comparable neighborhood at a similar price. Johnson noted that no permanent displacement is planned at this time. Under the certification section of the application, the County will certify that the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance (RARA) Plan is in place. If it is discovered that this specific project does permanently displace persons or households, a displacement implementation plan must be submitted to CDFA before obligating or expending funds.

**Chair calls for public comment, and none was received.**

**At 9:18 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to close the second public hearing to discuss the proposed RARA Plan. Commissioner Clark seconded it. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Wozmak moved to adopt the Residential Anti-displacement and Relocation Assistance Plan. Commissioner Clark seconded it. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**IV. County Administrator**

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

Coates then said he reached out to the governor's office concerning three funding areas. The first is for the new EMS department construction costs, and the overall idea was well received. A second request is for funding for the nursing home project, which amounts to over \$700K of the \$36M cost of the renovation. The third item was affordable housing funding for Counties. He requested funding to bring together various organizations to concentrate efforts to be more effective in bringing affordable housing into the County.

Coates said that he received one email about the building of the COVID memorial on Winter Street. He spoke to the person about her concerns and comments and addressed another individual's questions about the County's use of the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds.

Coates relayed another individual's concern over the old pauper graves on Ferry Road were not being well cared for. It was discussed that the Maplewood facilities department is maintaining the area, but Coates and Bouchard will investigate to understand the nature of the complaint better. (Prior to the end of the meeting, Coates had an ariel picture of the cemetery and it appears to be well maintained).

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Coates said the Jose Lezcano summer concert begins on July 9<sup>th</sup> in Keene and will offer other concerts throughout the County during the summer.

Coates then stated that the Commissioners had been registered for the New Hampshire Association of Conferences in Portsmouth in October; however, many of the training and presentation sessions have not yet been published.

Coates has scheduled, in concert with the Chairman of the Delegation, an Executive committee meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM and a meeting for the Delegation on August 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM but this is subject to change.

Coates stated that he was informed that Strafford County had terminated the Napoli legal firm from the Opiate lawsuit.

Coates said that the Commissioner's Cookout will be held on August 18<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 to 1:00 PM and will be held at the National Grange Mutual Park space next to the 33 West Street parking lot.

V. **Old Business:** None

VI. **New Business:** None

VII. **Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of June 24, 2022. **Commissioner Englund moved to accept the manifests and minutes, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

VIII. **Calendar**

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

IX. **General Discussion for Commissioners**

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

X. **Nonpublic Sessions**

At 9:49 AM, Commissioner Wozmak moved to enter a non-meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:2, I (a) to review and discuss strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.

**At 11:20 AM, the Commissioners moved unanimously to return to the public session.**

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**XI. Adjournment**

**AT 11:21 AM, the Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. 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