

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting**  
**Wednesday, August 31, 2022**

**This meeting was conducted  
electronically via Zoom**

**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, Maplewood Facilities Director Harrison, Grants Manager Harrison, IT Director Hummel, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard

**Guest(s):** **Stafford County Commissioner and NH Association of Counties representative George Maglaras, and Attorney Robert J. Bonsignore of the Bonsignore and Brewer**

**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.

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

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

Bansley said that the Drug Court is interested in applying for a grant to monies for a recovery support services coach to supplement the needed client services for the program that are restricted by current funding. It was discussed that this funding would allow transition services to be provided for graduates of the programs and that these services would help prevent recidivism.

**Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to approve the grant submission and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**III. Scheduled Items**

Master Agenda Item #1014: NH Counties Opiate Lawsuit Status was then taken up for discussion.

Commissioner Maglaras spoke about the current law firm's dismissal due to several attorney-client conflicts. He said he had spoken with the State of NH Attorney General concerning the issues and decided to move forward with a different firm. He also consulted with the State Opiate trust group, and it was agreed to move forward with new representation. Commissioner Wozmak asked about the possible effect of changing firms in reaching a settlement.

Maglaras provided a detailed explanation of the reasons. They said that the drug retailers are the last defendants that have exposure and that they would try to settle instead of going to trial, according to Attorney Bonsignore.

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Bonsignore explained in detail why it is essential to move forward to recover the tremendous financial losses experienced in the State during the Opiate crisis.

The issues that are part of the claims included in the lawsuits were covered in detail, and it was also learned that improper conduct on the part of the previous firm had triggered the impetus to move to different counsel.

It was also discussed that the practices that caused many significant drug-related issues in the medical and retail environments had been tightened up significantly to prevent a re-occurrence of the abuses.

**Commissioner Wozmak moved to end representation with the current firm that represents Cheshire County in the Opiate lawsuit matter and to join Strafford, Coos, Rockingham, and Grafton in pursuing alternative litigation counsel and to authorize the County Administrator to notify the current firm of this decision.**

**Commissioner Englund seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

At 9:06 AM, Master Agenda Item #1016: Master Agenda Item: Victim Services Training Grant was discussed.

**Bansley said that she had had to move quickly because of an extremely short response time to apply and submit a grant for a \$7,045.50 grant agreement with the NH Department of Justice to train two victim coordinators and an attorney with the grant funding and before the Commissioners to seek authorization to both submit and accept the grant to fund the training.**

**Following an explanation of the use of the funds and a short discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to authorize the grant submission and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

IT Director Hummel was then recognized and presented a request to the Commissioners for the sole source purchase of wireless equipment to improve the wireless services at the Nursing for staff and residents as the demand has grown significantly over the last few years. This upgrade was planned and budgeted for in the 2022 approved delegation budget with a not to exceed cost of \$65K.

Hummel related that he had sought bids from multiple vendors and suppliers, and only two chose to respond with quotes. He said he reached out to two firms and received bids

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from both companies. He noted that the bid proposal from Whalley Computer Associates in Southwick, MA, was significantly cheaper and met the design criteria. The second bid was determined to be not responsive to the design request.

He said that based on the equipment specified and the associated projected costs, he recommends the quote from Whalley Computer Associates.

A review of the existing environment at the Nursing Home and how it is used was covered, and Hummel said that he intends to repurpose the proposed wireless site software to be able to use it for other campuses in the County.

**Following discussion, Commissioner Wozmak moved to accept and approve a non-bid purchase based on the limited response of vendors.**

**Commissioner Clark moved to accept the bid from Whalley Computer Associates, Inc, of Southwick, MA, for \$53,718.00 against an approved budget of \$65,000.00 and was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #1015: Purchase of Maplewood Work Truck - B. Harrison

Harrison said he had searched a 250-mile radius for an appropriate vehicle for the budgeted cost and could not find a suitable truck. He asked for permission to work with dealers in the state to obtain the truck in a configuration that meets the requirements of the nursing home at a price that does not exceed the budgeted amount. **Following discussion, the Commissioners unanimously approved the request, and Harrison will return to the Commissioners for final approval once the vehicle is found to purchase.**

**IV. County Administrator**

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

Coates informed the Commissioners that a grant for \$875K has been received from the Northern Borders Commission to fund the Sheriff's Dispatch Radio Upgrade project. This funding will allow the project to be fully funded without taxpayer funding.

Wozmak then said that he had met with the Chief of SWMA and discussed rebuilding the regional Fire dispatch system in the County and surrounding contiguous areas through grant funds. This project would require a multi-state effort to install the equipment and

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upgrade the network and will involve the efforts of at least two or three state senators and congressional staff from New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts.

Coates said that the Community Power public hearings scheduled for September 7<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> would need to be moved to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> to allow for the draft of the documentation to be thoroughly reviewed by the Commissioners and to allow for any last-minute edits prompted by language changes pending from the ongoing PUC rule-making body.

Coates then said that the NHAC meeting would be held this Friday, and Commissioner Englund would attend.

Coates said that he and Trombly met with Cheshire Medical Center yesterday to discuss further exploring possible synergistic working relationships within the medical services community in the County, including developing medical staffing training programs to address critical shortages.

Coates then said that he had walked the Old Alms House Public Cemetery that is maintained by Maplewood Nursing Home staff on County property in Westmoreland to explore a concern expressed by a local resident and said that some repair work to the site is being considered in the coming months.

- V. **Old Business** - None
- VI. **New Business** - None
- VII. **Consent Agenda Items:**  
Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of August 24, 2022. **Commissioner Englund moved to accept the Manifests and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. 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

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**X. Nonpublic Sessions**

**XI. Adjournment**

**At 10:18 AM, there being no other public business, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. 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