

MINUTES
Cheshire County Commissioners Meeting
Wednesday, January 18, 2023

Department of Corrections
825 Marlboro Road
Keene, NH 03431

Zoom 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, Grants Manager Bansley, Sheriff Rivera, Deputy Matt Sands, and Assistant County Administrator Bouchard
Guest(s): Elizabeth Dragon, Keene City Manager; Derrick Ferland, Sullivan County Manager; Kate Kirkwood, Lead abatement specialist; and Stanton Foundation K9 Trainer.

I. Public Comments

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made, at most 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.

Commissioner Englund and Clark were in attendance upon roll call vote.

Superintendent Iosue was recognized and said that the COVID outbreak in the facility is finally declining, and hopefully, the mask mandate will be lifted soon.

Director May was then recognized for a non-FLMA request for an employee critically injured in an auto accident over the weekend. She requested an initial eight-week non-paid leave of absence for the employee.

Commissioner Englund moved to approve the Leave of Absence, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

III. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1060: Maplewood - Loading Dock Access Door Security Request
Action Expected: Add safety and security features to the two back doors to the dock at the Nursing Home kitchen.

Kindopp explained the reasoning for the security request and provided diagrams and pictures supporting the need to enhance the security of the kitchen access.

Following discussions, Commissioner Englund moved to approve the bid for the addition of the security enhancements from Countryside Alarms for a total of

\$8,756.00. Commissioner Clark seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

At 08:37 AM Commissioner Wozmak joined the meeting.

Master Agenda Item #1061: Keene City Manager and Sullivan County Manager - Lead Abatement - Homeless Residents

Action Expected: To receive as informational a report from the Keene City Manager and the Sullivan County Manager on Lead Abatement and Homeless residents.

Manager Dragon provided an overview of the background of the Lead Abatement program for the City of Keene. She requested consideration of a possible joint program with the City of Keene, Sullivan, and Cheshire Counties.

An extended discussion ensued, and Commissioner Englund asked about the testing of the students that took place for tracking lead levels in students' bloodstreams. Ferland said that the program instituted in Sullivan County is a follow-on to SB 247 Related Lead Samples in the Environmental Monitoring Database produced by the State of NH for all schools in the state.

A HUD grant is contemplated to fund the work for both Sullivan and Cheshire County. Ferland said he was informed last week that HUD grant applications are due on March 14th and will only be for new grantees. He stated that several issues needed to be worked out as much detail was put into the first grant and could possibly be reused in a new grant application.

Commissioner Clark spoke to the Keene-based Southwestern Community Services (SCS) housing program and said that remediation efforts have been made in the past and asked if the new program would address the repair of some of the old fixes that were only encapsulation instead of permanent abatement.

An extended discussion began about the budget, scope, and relevance to County operations.

Bansley addressed some concerns, specifically the administration fee schedule, gathering data, and staff hiring.

Kate Kirkwood, a lead abatement specialist, was then recognized and spoke of the thirteen grants she has written in the past and described some of the available data.

Bansley suggested that a meeting of decision-makers be convened quickly to review the work scope and make decisions on the fly to meet program deadlines and said that she would facilitate the coordination of efforts, and everyone agreed to the Bansley proposal.

Dragon then spoke about homelessness in the Keene area and said that a city council and public committee were recently created, and a report was produced on this topic. An element of the discussion was the release of inmates into the community. She said tracking the homeless individuals, where they came from, and where they are going is challenging.

Iosue then spoke and described the work to gather statistics on the number and types of releases which run approximately six per week.

Commissioner Wozmak described a prior program that provided some taxi services to inmates released from Protective Custody, and Dragon was in strong support of restoring a similar program.

The Commissioners thanked Dragon, Ferland, and Kirkwood for their attendance and participation in the meeting and then addressed Master Agenda Item #1062: NH DHHS Transportation Equity Subcontract Extension – S. Bansley

Action Expected: Vote to authorize Wozmak, Coates, or Bansley to enter into the Regional Level Rural Transportation Equity Project grant agreement amendment with NH DHHS.

Bansley said that this amendment extends the end date from 5/31/23 to 5/31/24. There is no change in the contract amount of \$530,000. These funds are used to support a subcontract with SWRPC to provide regional mobility management services and with various nonprofit organizations within the community for transportation equity projects as selected by the Monadnock Region Coordinating Council for Community Transportation.

Following a short discussion, Commissioner Englund moved to accept the agreement amendment, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously. The required documentation was then signed by Commissioner Clark as the Board Clerk and notarized by Bouchard.

Master Agenda Item #1063: Stanton Foundation K9 Unit Establishment Grant – S. Bansley, E. Rivera

Action Expected: Discuss and vote to approve an application to the Stanton Foundation for \$32,000 and no match to establish a K9 unit in Cheshire County Sheriff's Office.

Rivera introduced Deputy Sands, who would be involved in the program in the County, and a Hillborough Officer, who is a regional K9 trainer. He then spoke about how the funding could be utilized to pay for the proposed Cheshire County K9 program and stated that an account could be created for the ongoing support costs of the K9 for about \$17K that should last from three to five years. He said that annual budgeted funding after the end of the grant is anticipated to be about \$2K to \$2.5K per year.

The K9 officer spoke at length and in great detail about the training of the dogs and officers and said that Stafford National Guard is the training point in the State. He also said that he runs the ongoing maintenance training set at about 16 hours a month which is held around the state.

Rivera said that dogs typically have two certifications. Patrol and one other specialty. The Cheshire K9 would be additionally certified in drug tracking.

Several questions were asked and answered concerning the use of the K9s for searches in domestic and mental health issues. An extended discussion of situations that dogs have been valuable and helpful began.

Following discussions, Commissioner Wozmak made a motion to approve the grant, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. 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 said that on January 25th from 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM, the Commissioners are invited to Monadnock Ford for a celebration for the conclusion of the 2023 United Way fundraising campaign.

He then said that on Wednesday, February 1, the Monadnock branding campaign will be discussed at the Commissioner’s meeting and that discussion will be led by the Keene and Peterborough Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Lucia Paris and Yankee Magazine Publisher Jamie Trowbridge.

Coates then said that the County’s share of the state opiate settlement funding would be addressed in the coming weeks, and the present balance is over \$200K. He said that the monies would be utilized in the County to support the work of the Behavioral Health and Drug Court programs.

Coates then segued into discussing EMS funding and the possible impact of pending house bill HB373, which would enable balance billing for ambulance services in the State to help fund statewide EMS services.

Coates then said that he and some of the staff is meeting with Merrimack County concerning the Annual County Conference at the Doubletree in Manchester that Cheshire County will be hosting later this year. He said that the Doubletree rooms are significantly less expensive, and the food costs will also be lower than the venue in Portsmouth used last year. He said that the conference meeting dates are October 22nd – 24th.

Coates stated that the wheelchair transportation provider for the hospital has discontinued services and that a meeting concerning the use of the County EMS wheelchair van will be had in the coming few weeks. He stated that there are a few options to consider but that he thought it wouldn’t be feasible or advisable to have the County EMS personnel provide services in the near future due to a lack of suitable staffing.

Coates said that some towns have reached out to the County to discuss using County EMS services which will be followed up with meetings and communication as requested by the towns. He also said that a meeting with the City of Keene would take place tomorrow night and that he, the EMS Chief, and Commissioner Wozmak would attend.

V. **Old Business**

VI. **New Business**

VII. **Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests for January 11, 2023, January 18, 2023, and the Minutes of the January 04, 2023, meeting.

Commissioner Englund moved to accept the manifests and minutes as presented 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 and Restorative Justice Program

X. **Nonpublic Sessions:**

XI. **Adjournment**

At 10:55 AM, There being no other public business to discuss, Commissioner Wozmak moved to adjourn the meeting, and Commissioner Clark seconded the motion. 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