

**COMMISSIONERS MEETING  
MINUTES**

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

This meeting will be conducted in person  
and electronically (via Zoom) at the

33 West St, Second Floor  
Keene, NH 03431

**Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656**

**Meeting ID: 409 748 8803**

**Pin #: 6031233**

**Start Time 08:30 AM**

**Present:** Commissioners Jack Wozmak and Terry Clark

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Superintendent Iosue, Finance Director Trombly, County Project Manager Bouchard, and Executive Assistant Gouger

**Guest(s):**

At 8:33 AM, Commissioners Wozmak and Clark responded as "present," Commissioner Englund is absent with notice.

**Public Comments**

Upon recognition from the Chair, a Public Comment on topics of interest may be made, at most three (3) minutes in length.

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

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

Coates asks Superintendent Iosue if they have found someone to replace Major Erwin, who is retiring. Superintendent Iosue says that Major Michael Thompson will move into the coordinator position. They must now fill the Director of Programs post since Thompson will leave it to assume his new job.

Sheriff Rivera discusses the school shooting in Tennessee, noting that police chiefs have had conversations regarding improving safety within the County. NH Department of Safety Assistant Commissioner Eddie Edwards, Homeland Security Director Rob Buxton, and DOE Comm. Frank Edelblut joined the discussion.

During the meeting, they discussed ways to improve safety in rural schools and response times. For example, it was stated that a majority of the County's smaller town police departments do not have enough staff to respond quickly. Sheriff Rivera notes that he has asked Suzanne Bansley to investigate possibilities of monies that we can use to enforce safety.

Sheriff Rivera states that over the last few days, they have developed a pilot proposal within the school districts to employ safety officers within schools through the Sheriff's department.

The program will be called The Guardian Program. There are roughly 1.2-1.5 million dollars over two years to hire over ten staff to get safety officers in school. Since this is a pilot program, they are looking at \$700,000 coming into the County.

It was learned that there are 52 educational facilities in this County. Thirty-one are some regards related to elementary teaching. Seven of the communities in the County do not have a full-time police department.

Coates asks if they will be trained deputies. Sheriff Rivera states that special deputies will be assigned only on the school grounds. There will need to be a legislative change that a Sheriff can deputize someone without the same training that full and part-time deputies undergo. In addition, they would create a new training program specifically for this program.

Coates notes that they also need to have a buy-in from the schools with this program. Funding was discussed, and it was stated that when the pilot program ends, this would be when the County might be involved in helping raise funds to continue the program. Sheriff Rivera says state funding will eventually be allocated to fully fund the program.

Commissioner Clark asks when the schools are going to be involved. Sheriff Rivera says that he has been in contact with a few schools and will have further discussions with them in the coming weeks.

Commissioner Clark asks what the training will look like. Sheriff Rivera says it will be roughly a three-week program, discussing perimeters and safety, among other things. There will be a psychological test as well. Coates states that when there is a discussion regarding training, the schools should be involved so they can voice what they want to see what training looks like.

Coates says his only concern is where the commitment comes from within the school districts. There are concerns about how quickly the program will move and the school districts' comprehension level.

Sheriff says that of the schools present during the discussion with the police chiefs, all favored the program.

Coates finalizes the conversation by stating that this is a preliminary meeting, and we will discuss further at the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Commissioners meeting.

## **II. Scheduled Items**

Master Agenda Item #1078: Monadnock SRT & Sole Source Approval of Equipment – S. Bansley.  
**Action Expected: Vote to waive competitive bidding provisions for procuring equipment for the Monadnock SRT project funded by an NH Department of Homeland Security Search and Rescue grant.**

Bansley discusses the Monadnock Special Response Team. She says this is a grant for specific equipment for search and response. Monadnock SRT was awarded \$12,000 and approved to

purchase headset communications. However, when the procurement was submitted, it was denied due to the specificity of the equipment. In addition, cameras have now allowed for better visibility in confined areas.

She is seeking approval for sole sourcing for the cameras since, after research, there is no other vendor to supply these.

**Commissioner Wozmak moved to waive competitive bidding provisions to procure equipment for the Monadnock SRT project funded by an NH Department of Homeland Security Search and Rescue grant.**

**This motion was seconded by Commissioner Clark, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Master Agenda Item #1079: RTP-CRT Surry-Westmoreland (Fiscally-Sponsored) Grant Agreement - S. Bansley

**Action Expected: Vote to accept and sign the grant agreement and associated documents from the New Hampshire Bureau of Trails Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant to rehab at least one mile of the Cheshire Rail Trail from the Keene-Surry town line into Westmoreland (as far as funds will allow); grant amount of \$28,671.12, with a match of \$7,167.78, to be met through a combination of discounts on contracted services and volunteer in-kind time.**

Bansley says that the County applied for \$80,000 initially for this project, which was cut to \$28,671. It was reduced because the New Hampshire Bureau of Trails Recreational Trail Program can fund as many projects as possible. The RTP program wants to see the County focus on one current project. She says Coates will sign an MOU (Memo of Understanding) and work with Jeremy Evans as the project manager to move the project along.

She will also work on the new grant for next year as an extension for the same project.

**Commissioner Clark moved to accept and sign the grant agreement and associated documents from the New Hampshire Bureau of Trails Recreational Trail Program (RTP) grant to rehab at least one mile of the Cheshire Rail Trail from the Keene-Surry town line into Westmoreland (as far as funds will allow); grant amount of \$28,671.12, with a match of \$7,167.78, to be met through a combination of discounts on contracted services and volunteer in-kind time.**

**County Administrator Coates seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

### **III. County Administrator**

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

Coates says on April 18, they had the volunteer recognition dinner at Maplewood, and roughly 20-25 volunteers were there.

Coates states the executive committee only has an NHAC meeting on Friday.

Coates asks where we are on CPCNH, and Commissioner Clark says there is a Friday board meeting. Community Power for the County has some financials that must be re-voted on and is hoping to have more information by May 24. Clark says he discussed having the Winchester board meeting next month, possibly May 17.

Coates said that for the past number of years, he has been on the Southwest Regional Commission Board and had recently submitted his resignation from the group. He said he would propose designating Rod Bouchard as the County of Cheshire Commissioner representative to SWRPC to ensure that the County is represented in SWRPC's important County and Regional work.

**Following a short discussion, Commissioner Clark moved to designate Rod Bouchard as the County of Cheshire Commissioner representative to the Southwest Regional Planning Commission (SWRPC) pursuant to NH RSA 36:46 Formation of Regional Planning Commissions and to seek consideration for his appointment to SWRPC Board of Directors at the annual meeting in June of 2023.**

**The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wozmak, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates says that the construction in County Hall is moving forward, but there is still much to be done, but he is pleased with the progress.

Coates says the Covid memorial is taking shape outside the Winter St entrance.

Coates says that the generator behind the Courthouse and Dispatch Center had received one bid. Project Manager Bouchard says the bid responses were due last Friday, April 14, 2023. However, based on the past County practice and Commissioners' preferences, he is looking for at least two more bids.

Bouchard formally requests to re-open the generator project's bidding process to meet that requirement.

**Commissioner Clark moved to re-open the bid, and Commissioner Wozmak seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Coates says the Union Leader will be doing an article on Cheshire County Emergency Medical Services (CCEMS.) A photographer will take pictures of the fleet and building early next week.

Coates says that he also sent material to the Sentinel that was requested.

There is a further discussion regarding inter-facility transfers and billing.

#### **IV. Old Business**

Commissioner Wozmak asks Trombly if there is an update on EMS billing. Trombly says she is still diving into the data to understand better how the process works. She needs to look at several things to determine where the billing is coming from, whether it is Maplewood or EMS. She is working with Blue Cross to determine the differential and rejections that have been seen.

Trombly hopes to have more meaningful conversations regarding billing in the future. For example, she asks if Maplewood should be billed during interfacility transfers, and Commissioner Wozmak confirms. She said that a company named CTS does the billing for WellSense, AmeriaHealth, and others and that she has a good relationship with them.

Commissioner Wozmak says that every bill needs to be reviewed if they are out of network. He notes that he is hoping to see what happens with negotiations.

Commissioner Clark notes that we will need to figure out those contract numbers for when towns come to us for contracts. Commissioner Wozmak says that he thinks they should review the contract language and reevaluate how the service meets the needs of the towns as well as the County.

V. **New Business:** None

VI. **Consent Agenda Items:**

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests for April 19, 2023, and the meeting minutes of April 12, 2023.

**Commissioner Clark moved to accept the manifests of April 19, 2023, and the minutes of April 12, 2023, as presented. County Administrator Coates seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

VII. **Calendar**

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

No changes.

VIII. **General Discussion for Commissioners**

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

IX. **Nonpublic Sessions:**

X. **Adjournment**

**At 10:58 AM, Commissioner Clark moved to adjourn the meeting, and County Administrator seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

Recorded and edited by:  
C. Gouger  
Executive Assistant  
Office of the Commissioners

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