

**MINUTES**  
**Cheshire County Delegation Meeting**  
**Monday, March 22, 2021**  
**County Hall**  
**Pursuant to Emergency Order #12 and Executive Order 2020-04**  
**This meeting will be conducted electronically.**

**Conference Call Information**  
**Phone Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656**  
**Meeting ID: 409 748 8803**  
**Pin #: 6031233**

**Present:** Representatives Abbott, Berch, Harvey, Weber, Eaton, Welkowitz, Bordenet, Fox, Von Plinsky, Ames, Hunt, Qualey, Fenton, Faulkner, Gomarlo, Ley, Parshall, Rhodes, and Shapiro.

Commissioners: Jack Wozmak, Robert Englund, and Terry Clark.

**Staff:** County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, Assistant County Administrator Bouchard, Assistant Finance Director Hall, Nursing Home Administrator Kindopp.

**Guest(s):**

**At 7:00 pm, Representatives Eaton opened the meeting and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Delegates attending the meeting.**

**Responding as present were Representatives Abbott, Berch, Harvey, Weber, Eaton, Welkowitz, Bordenet, Fox, Von Plinsky, Ames, Hunt, Qualey, Fenton, Faulkner, Gomarlo, Ley, Parshall, Rhodes, and Shapiro.**

**Representatives Eaton then moved to conduct this meeting as an emergency meeting under the relevant provisions of NH RSA 91-A, and consistent with the recommendations contained in Executive Order 2020-04 Order 12 issued by Governor Sununu. Representative Berch seconded the motion, and upon roll-call vote, the motion passed unanimously.**

**Emergency Order #12 Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04  
Temporary modification of public access to meetings under RSA 91-A  
Pursuant to Section 18 of Executive Order 2020-04, it is hereby ordered, effective immediately, that:**

1. Pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, paragraph 8 provides: "State and local government bodies are permitted and encouraged to utilize the emergency meeting provisions of RSA 91-A to conduct meetings through electronic means while preserving, to the extent feasible, the Public's right to notice of such meetings and ability to observe and listen contemporaneously."
2. Pursuant to Emergency Order #2 issued pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, gatherings of fifty people or more are prohibited.
3. To implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, II 1 (b), that a quorum of a public body be physically present unless immediate action is imperative, is waived

for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04.

4. To further implement these orders and recommendations, the requirement in RSA 91-A:2, II 1 (c), that each part of a meeting of a public body is audible or otherwise discernible to the public "at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting" is waived for the duration of the State of Emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-04 so long as the Public body:

- Provides public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by
- video or other electronic means.
- Provides public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.
- Provides a mechanism for the Public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are
- problems with access; and
- Adjourns the session if the Public is unable to access the meeting.

Coates then outlined the rules of the meeting.

1. The Public has an opportunity at the beginning of the Commissioners Meeting under "Public Comment" to speak. Community input will not be allowed after that point unless recognized and allowed by the Chair of the Commissioners.

2. All votes will be Roll Call, and when recognized, we are asking that you re-state your name and yes or no.

3. If you have a question or motion that you would like to ask to put forward, please state the following, "Mr. Chair, Commissioner (your name) has a question or motion."

4. If you are having issues hearing the call, please text or call the County Administrator at (603)313-9002.

5. Please mute your phones so background noise won't interfere with the meeting.

6. This meeting has been posted on our website so that the Community, department heads, and media can listen to the meeting.

7. This meeting is utilizing a Zoom Platform so listeners can join us via audio or audio/visual.

At 7:04 pm, the Chair, Representatives Eaton moved to open the meeting with reading of the agenda.

First order of business was to review the Proposed Energy Lease Project information that was mailed to all members of the Delegation. The full document is available on the County website @ [www.co.cheshire.nh.us](http://www.co.cheshire.nh.us).

**Having no questions, a Motion was made by Representative Harvey, seconded by Jenny Gomarlo, to authorize the energy upgrade lease proposal in an amount not to exceed \$4,741,964. The program involves investment in fixture and equipment changes at all county-owned campuses that will yield substantial reductions in energy consumptions and reduce our carbon footprint. And to authorize the County Commissioners to enter into the program lease-purchase contract with a non-appropriation clause and execute any documents related thereto. A roll call vote was taken and passed 17 to 2.**

Eaton then recognized Representative Berch, Chair of the Executive Committee, to provide an overview of the Executive Committee budget process. Berch spoke to the overall decrease in taxes accomplished over the course of the Executive Committee budget review during January and February 2021. With the assistance and cooperation from the County Commissioners and County staff, the Executive Committee presented a budget that resulted in a very moderate increase in taxes to be raised of .60% or \$172,712. Berch thanked the Executive Committee for their hard work during this process.

Eaton then read the motion to accept and adopt the Executive Committee proposed budget for 2021 in the amount as amended to include the energy upgrade lease in the amount of \$60,749,958. Representative Berch moved the motion. Representative Gomarlo seconded it.

**Berch asked for an amendment to the motion to be made to add \$10,000 for an outside agency, VT/NH Visiting Nurse and Hospice. Representative Abbott seconded the motion.**

After much discussion, a vote was taken, and the motion passed after a Roll call vote with 15 Yeas and 4 Nays.

Representative Berch made a motion, seconded by Representative Gomarlo, to accept and adopt the Executive Committee Proposed budget as further amended for 2021 in the amount of \$60,759,958. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 17 Yeas and 2 Nays.

Eaton then brought forward the next order of business to approve taxes to be raised. A motion was made by Representative Faulkner and seconded by Representative Harvey to adopt the 2021 taxes to be raised from the city and towns of the County in the amount of \$28,901,083 for the 2021 budget year. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 17 Yeas and 2 Nays.

Eaton then said the next order of business is a motion to abate the interest charge for late payment on county tax payments for 2020 for the Town of Rindge. The motion was made by Representative Eaton and seconded by Representative Hunt to approve the request from the Rindge board of Selectmen to abate the interest charged for late payment of the 2020 County Tax payment for the Town of Rindge for \$3,431.61. Upon Roll Call vote, the motion passed with 17 Yeas and 2 Nays.

Eaton then brought forward a request to abate the interest charge for late payment on county tax payments for 2020 for the Town of Stoddard. The motion was made by Representative Hunt and seconded by Representative Eaton to approve the request from the Stoddard board of Selectmen to abate the interest charged for late payment of the 2020 County Tax payment for the Town of Stoddard for \$3,066.97. Upon Roll Call vote, the motion passed with 17 Yeas and 2 Nays.

The next order of business was to discuss setting aside funds to restore the Cupola of County Hall. Upon further discussion, a Motion was made by Representative Abbott and seconded by Representative Fox to set aside up to \$222,000 from the 2021 Proshare funds to restore the Cupola and the building soffits, window trim, eaves, and gutters. This allocation will go towards the project cost of \$850,000 to restore the 12 Court Street Cupola Project and add to the previous \$222,000 that was set aside with 2020 Proshare Funds. The approval is contingent on receiving an amount near or equal to the Proshare funds received in 2020, with any remainder raised through private fundraising contribution. Upon Roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 19-0.

Eaton then introduced Steve Horton, project manager for an update on the Maplewood Construction Project. Horton indicated that the end is in sight. He said that there are about two months left in the final phase, and the project is at 98% completion. Representative Ames asked how the census is at Maplewood. Nursing Home Administrator Kindopp stated the census is currently 108.

The low census is due to COVID restrictions and staffing shortages that have been a struggle but even more so due to COVID. Kindopp noted that as the construction is finalized, she will need to fill staffing first before she could fill the beds. Representative Ames asked if there was anything they can do to support. Kindopp spoke to the fact that entry-level staffing shortages is challenging. Housekeeping currently has seven vacancies and no applicants. It was tough to compete with the additional amount that was provided with unemployment by the Cares Act.

Representative Shapiro asked what the fiscal impact of hiring a Nursing agency. Finance Director Trombly spoke to the fact that it is roughly a \$10 per hour premium for the agency staffing.

Administrator Coates took a moment to recognize Facilities Director Bruce Harrison for all he has done with the renovation project. Representative Ames inquired on the new energy systems. Director Harrison provided a brief overview of some of the changes. Representative Abbott took the opportunity to thank Nursing Home Administrator for all that she has done with COVID and construction.

Administrator Coates spoke to the American Rescue Plan; the County will be a recipient of over \$14 million to be contributed to the Community. The County has hired Attorney Will Pearson (former state rep) to dissect the bill and help guide the County on what can and can't be done with the forthcoming funding.

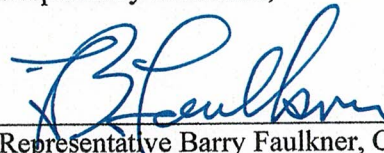
Administrator Coates' last item of the meeting was to express gratitude to the county staff for their dedication and willingness to adapt to the changes that were asked of them over the last year. He is proud and honored to work with these people every day.

Representative Ames asked about the state budget and the DHHS cap for County. Administrator Coates stated that the cap is within the limits of what we were expecting.

The last item of the planned agenda is to discuss any other matters to come before the Delegation.

Seeing none, at 8:05 pm, a motion to adjourn was made by Representative Berch and seconded by Rep Harvey.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Barry Faulkner", written over a horizontal line.

Representative Barry Faulkner, Clerk  
Cheshire County Delegation