

MINUTES

Cheshire County Delegation Meeting

Monday, March 21, 2022, 7:00 PM

County Hall

This meeting will be conducted in person and electronically.

Conference Call Information

Phone Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803

Pin #: 6031233

Present: Representatives Hunt, Eaton, Weber, Ames, Berch, Maneval, Abbott, Bordenet, Fenton, Von Plinsky, Gomarlo, Welkowitz, Fox, Parshall, Qualey, Santonastaso, Rhodes, Toll, and Faulkner.

Absent: Representatives Harvey, Mann, Kilanski, and Shapiro.

Commissioners: Jack Wozmak 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 7:05 PM, Representative Eaton opened the meeting, and County Administrator Coates conducted a roll-call of the Delegates attending the meeting.

Responding as present were Representatives Hunt, Eaton, Weber, Ames, Berch, Maneval, Abbott, Bordenet, Fenton, Von Plinsky, Gomarlo, Welkowitz, Fox, Parshall, Qualey, Santonastaso, Rhodes, Toll, and Faulkner

The first item of business on the agenda was to review and ratify the Sheriff and Department of Corrections Collective Bargaining Agreements.

Trombly explained the details of the contracts and reviewed the financial impacts for the thirty-six months of the agreements.

Coates presented an overview of the proposed agreement and answered questions about the details of the final contract. **Following discussions representative, Tole moved to accept and ratify the collective bargaining agreement effective April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2025, for the Cheshire County Sheriff's department, and representative Fenton seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 18-0.**

Representative Rhodes then moved to accept the contracts and ratify the collective bargaining agreement effective April 1, 2022, through March 31, 2025, for the Cheshire County Department of Corrections and representative Bordenet seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 18-0.

Representative Eaton presented a motion for consideration to increase the Fees of the Sheriffs and Deputy Sheriffs by 1% effective July 1, 2022, as per RSA 104:3. The motion was moved by representative Hunt and seconded by representative Weber.

Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously 19-0.

Coates was then recognized for a presentation on the American Rescue Plan Act Funds (ARPA) anticipated second round of funding. Coates said that the previous funding tranche is complete and that the second payment will be received in June or July of this year.

He outlined how the first round of funds was used and listed funding for the Energy upgrade project, completion of campus projects at the Maplewood nursing home, the funding for the EMS department startup, funds distributed to the towns, and the city of Keene, and other expenses.

He then addressed the proposed use of the second round of funding. He said that the monies would be used for the startup of the EMS department, replacement of the forty-two-year-old County Hall generator, interior renovation of Delegation Hall, the installation of an adequate audio and video system for public meetings in the Delegation meeting room, funding for the development of medical training programs in concert with Cheshire Medical Center and Keene State College, funding support to towns for broadband installation and economic development, funding for Lifeguard training programs to enable towns to open or reopen town swimming pools, funding for mental health programs and support for several County Arts programs.

He also said that funds would be made available to support further Broadband installation for smaller towns through programs run by the Southwest Regional Planning Commission and funding for employee support and retention programs.

Coates responded to several questions from the representatives and provided them with the details of some specific projected allocations.

A complete list of the current use and anticipated funding of the American Rescue Plan Act funds will be posted on the County website in the coming weeks. <https://co.cheshire.nh.us>

Representative Paul Berch was then enthusiastically welcomed back to the delegation's meeting after being out due to a health issue for an extended period.

The next agenda item that was taken up for consideration was to receive information on a project to upgrade the Infrastructure for the Cheshire County Sheriff Dispatch Department.

The following information was supplied by the Sheriff's Department in support of the project.

Project Description: Enhancement of operational capabilities of the Cheshire County Dispatch Radio system, including replacement of outdated/failing and unsupported and additional Radio System Equipment.

\$2,499,532 Total of radio system equipment, including engineering, installation, configuration, and optimization. For a total of 14 sites. The project adds one new site where radio coverage is lacking and an additional operator's console position at dispatch.

\$475,350 Civil work, i.e., microwave backhaul radios and alignment, antenna, cabling, lightning and grounding protection and installation to current industry standard, removal of the old system.

Total Project Cost \$2,974,882

The goal of this project is to have automatic failover and continuity of the Sheriff Dispatch 's critical first responder communications in rural Cheshire County.

As a result of this project, radio coverage and capacity will be increased, and its quality will be clear and seamless. Additionally, critical time-saving capabilities will be, increased and lengthy repair time and communication will be interruptions avoided.

The ultimate impact of this project is saving lives through increased community safety and security. The robust interoperability and seamless communications that this project will create are expected to provide immense peace of mind to residents of Cheshire County in the event that they are in need of first responders' help. In the most unfortunate event of a widespread disaster, first responders will be able to reliably communicate with each other and with dispatch. This project will ensure that Cheshire County Dispatch Center can dependably serve as the foundation of public safety communications. This project will save time, and in this line of work, saving time means saving lives.

Coates then spoke to the projected \$2.9M cost of the project, saying that Congressional funding for \$750K is being committed to the project, and other grants are being pursued that would bring the cost further down to approximately \$1.2M and potentially substantially less provided additional federal funding comes through as anticipated.

Sheriff Rivera said that the current system is near collapse and that there are no good options other than replacing the equipment. Representative Eaton strongly concurred that was indeed the situation and that it needs to be rectified.

The next item to be discussed was to review the Executive Committee's Proposed Budget for 2022.

Trombly then addressed all changes made by the Executive committee, which were mailed to all representatives. She pointed the members to the handout that showed further reductions. She discussed the impact on the budget for wage adjustments.

Representative Gomarlo moved to adopt the 2022 budget for \$69,487,730, and Representative Abbott seconded the motion. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 16-3.

The next motion to be considered was to adopt 2022 taxes to be raised from the city and towns of the County in the amount of \$29,093,371. Representative Von Plinsky moved the

motion, and Representative Bordenet seconded it. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed 16-3.

The next agenda item to be considered was to set elected officials' salaries for 2023-2024. Representative Hunt moved to approve the following Elected Official's salary effective January 1, 2023, and Representative Berch seconded the motion.

The following was presented to the Delegation for review and discussion.

County Commissioners Chair - \$13,500 per year
County Commissioners, Vice-Chair and Clerk - \$12,000 per year
County Treasurer - \$1,500 per year
Register of Deeds - \$59,280 per year
County Attorney - \$98,800 per year
County Sheriff - \$59,280 per year

Following several questions addressed to the assembled members' satisfaction, a roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed 19-0.

At 7:44 PM Representative Fenton 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. Representative Eaton seconded the motion, and the non-meeting non-public commenced upon unanimous vote.

As a result of discussions during the non-public session, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.

At 7:48 PM, the Delegation, upon roll call vote, moved to return to public session unanimously.

At 7:51 PM, representative Eaton moved to enter A non-public meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(d) for the consideration of the acquisition, sale, or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community. Representative Gomarlo seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed 19-0.

As a result of deliberations in the non-public session, no decisions were made, and no vote was taken.

At 8:23 PM, the assembled Delegation members voted unanimously to return to the public session.

Representative Fenton then presented the following motion for the authorization to purchase Real Estate for the Cheshire County EMS Services.

Motion to authorize the Cheshire County Commissioners to negotiate and execute a real estate Purchase and Sale Agreement with the owners of real estate located at 53 Monadnock Highway, Swanzey, NH, and to carry out the intent of the Agreement for the purchase of said real estate in an amount up to \$395,000 for the purpose of housing the Cheshire County EMS services.

Representative Eaton seconded the motion, and upon roll call vote, the motion passed 17-2.

At 8:23 PM, there being no other matters to come before the Delegation a unanimous voice vote was taken to conclude the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Barry Faulkner, Clerk
Cheshire County Delegation