



COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Minutes

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

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

County Hall
12 Court Street
Keene, NH 03431

Zoom Call-in Number: +1 646 558 8656

Meeting ID: 409 748 8803

Pin #: 603123

Start Time 08:30 AM

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

Staff: County Administrator Coates, Finance Director Trombly, HR Director May, Superintendent Iosue, Director of the Cheshire County Conservation District Littleton, Field Specialist Majewski, and Director of Executive Services/Communications Bernstein

Guest(s): Interim Director of UNH Cooperative Extension Loader

Public Comments

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

-The Commissioners opened the meeting at 8:35AM. Seeing no public comments County Administrator Coates moved forward with the agenda.

I. Elected Officials & Department Head Updates

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

II. Scheduled Items

Master Agenda Item #1177: UNH Cooperative Extension Semi Annual Report & MOU – C. Majewski & A. Loader

Action Expected: To receive an as informational report as possible from UNH Cooperative Extension staff, and to discuss and sign the MOU between UNH and Cheshire County.

1. Field Specialist Majewski stated that the 4-H Program Manager has recently departed the position, and her replacement will be starting soon. He said that the program has been functioning well in the interim.

2. Interim Director of UNH Cooperative Extension Loader introduced herself to the Commissioners. As Assistant Director she managed field specialists and maintained high standards for the program. In March she was appointed Interim Director. Her goal is to keep and renew MOUs with Counties that must be examined and renewed every six years.

Loader said for every \$1.00 Cheshire County provides to the UNH Cooperative Extension, UNH provides \$1.89. The MOU ensures the relationship between the County and Cooperative Extension remains strong. It will need to be signed from officials on both sides.

Commissioner Englund asked if all 10 Counties have a similar relationship with UNH Extension.

Loader said that they are all very similar.

3. Commissioner Wozmak asked about invasive species in the region including the Emerald Ash Burrewer.

Majewski said although vigilance is always necessary there are no major concerns at the moment.

4. Wozmak asked if UNH Extension focuses on civics.

Majewski said that 4-H has a civic education component.

County Administrator Coates said there are a lot of programs across the state for civic engagement including Keene Comes Alive which teaches 3rd graders about the history of Keene including notable figures such as Nathan Blake.

5. Loader and Majewski said the 4-H program enrollment and volunteer levelers are slightly above pre-pandemic levels.

MOTION: Commissioner Clark made a motion to approve the signing of the MOU between Cheshire County and UNH Cooperative Extension, and Commissioner Englund seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #1178: RTP-CRT Westmoreland Fiscally-Sponsored Grant Agreement – S. Bansley

Action Expected: Vote to submit an application to New Hampshire's Bureau of Trails Recreational Trails Program for \$80,000 + \$20,000 match (to be met with in-kind volunteer time) to rehab about 7 miles of the Cheshire Rail Trail that runs through the towns of Westmoreland and Surry.

1. Grants Manager Bansley stated that the government prevents the use of funding to create irreversible changes to rail trails. This is due to the fact that the State of NH hopes railroads return to the rail trails. This means that any changes made to the rail trails have to be able to be removed in six months to be ready for a railroad.

MOTION: Commissioner Englund made a motion to submit an application to New Hampshire's Bureau of Trails Recreational Trails Program for \$80,000 + \$20,000 match (to be met with in-kind volunteer time) to rehab about 7 miles of the Cheshire Rail Trail that runs through the towns of Westmoreland and Surry, and Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #1179: RTP-CRT Troy Fiscally-Sponsored Application – S. Bansley
Action Expected: Vote to submit an application to New Hampshire's Bureau of Trails Recreational Trails Program for \$80,000 + \$20,000 match (to be met with in-kind volunteer time) to rehab at 2.24 miles of the Cheshire Rail Trail that runs through the town of Troy.

MOTION: Commissioner Englund made a motion to submit an application to New Hampshire's Bureau of Trails Recreational Trails Program for \$80,000 + \$20,000 match (to be met with in-kind volunteer time) to rehab at 2.24 miles of the Cheshire Rail Trail that runs through the town of Troy, and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon a roll call vote the motion passed unanimously.

Master Agenda Item #1180: Semi-Annual Report, Cheshire County Conservation District – A. Littleton

Action Expected: To receive an as informational report as possible from the Director of the Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD).

1. Director of the Cheshire County Conservation District Amanda began her report by stating the CCCD has been working with the local community to address needs and pressing issues.

She said that they understand that it has been a tough year for agriculture due to early frosts in the Spring.

Littleton said the CCCD does not do work with invasive species but other counties such as Coos do.

Littleton said the equipment share program has been in place for over 10 years. They have begun receiving grants to replace older equipment that has experienced wear and tear. She said that Counties throughout New England have used the CCCD as a model for how to perform an equipment share program. The equipment includes but is not limited to a 2 wheel walk behind tractor, a no till drill, and more.

Commissioner Wozmak asked if the rentals pay for the equipment.

Littleton said that is their goal, and they are very close to it, if not meeting that goal already.

Littleton said as we are entering summer months, they are focused on food access programs for low income and vulnerable populations. She said that those using SNAP dollars can receive 50% off at farm stands. The farmers receive the full price for their products, and those who need it receive the heavy discount.

Wozmak thanked Littleton for her hard work.

Master Agenda Item #1181: Emergency Management Director – C. Coates

Action Expected: To discuss County policy regarding emergency management.

1. County Administrator Coates began by referencing NH Rev State 21 P:39 (2022), which outlines the requirement for County governments to have an emergency management director and plan.

Commissioner Wozmak stated that he was the chief elected officer of the County as the Chair of the County Commission.

Coates said that Sheriff Rivera is available to step into this role.

2. Interim Cheshire EMS Chief said that emergency management is handled at multiple tiers, from FEMA to the County, to the towns, etc. McMurrer said this would allow us to support and coordinate with towns in Cheshire County.

McMurrer said that typically in a town the fire chief or police chief would take on this roll.

Commissioner Clark asked how towns coordinate an emergency that encompasses multiple towns.

McMurrer said with the addition of a county emergency manager we could support the coordination of multiple towns and liaise with the state.

County Administrator Coates said he wants to ensure this does not interfere with any current systems in place. This will only be done if there is a need, not if it would become a burden.

Coates said this matter would be addressed further during the June 5th Commissioners meeting.

III. County Administrator

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

1. County Administrator Coates stated he was waiting to hear back from Merrimack County regarding their interest in Community Power.

Commissioner Clark said Cheshire Community Power (CPCNH) is examining whether a fee to build up a reserve fund would be pertinent for future projects.

Finance Director Trombly asked who manages the finances of CPCNH.

Clark said it is Community Power NH.

2. Coates said the NH Business and Economic Agency recognized the Greater Monadnock Collaborative for their work in promoting the region, the County was thanked for their

support of this project as well. Coates said other Counties are not performing programs like this.

3. Coates said the inaugural meeting of the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee met last week. The first meeting was a productive conversation. The next meeting will take place at the end of June.

4. Coates said Congresswoman Kuster is visiting the Roosevelt School on Friday, May 31. He will be attending.

5. Coates said that the County podcast, County Conversations began last week.

6. CCEMS reached their record amount of runs on Friday, May 24th with 21 runs in one day.

IV. Old Business

V. New Business

VI. Consent Agenda Items:

Vote to accept the Weekly Manifests and Minutes of May 22, 2024.

Commissioner Englund moved to accept the manifests and minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Clark. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

VII. Calendar

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

VIII. General Discussion for Commissioners

IX. Nonpublic Sessions:

X. Adjournment

At 11:33 AM, Commissioner Englund moved to adjourn the meeting, which Commissioner Clark seconded. Upon roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by:
D. Bernstein
Director, Executive Services and Communications

Reviewed and approved by:
T. Clark, Clerk
Board of Commissioners