

Coös County Commissioners  
Special Meeting  
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH  
September 26, 2018

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady and Paul Grenier; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger (*arrived at 11:30*); Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; County Treasurer Sue Collins; HR Coordinator Julie Brunault (*arrived at 11:30*); Allison Rees, Underwood Engineers; representatives from JP Sicard and Dawson's Excavation. Commissioner Samson was excused.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the meeting at 11:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to amend the agenda to include under Other Business:
  - Awarding of Wentworth Location Riverbank Proposal to NNEFS/Dennis Thompson.
  - Proshare/IDN Funding - Coös County Treasurer Sue Collins.
  - HR Position View - Coös County Treasurer Sue Collins.
  - Coös Bay, Oregon/Coös County, New Hampshire - Solar Eclipse 2023-2024.
  - Nonpublic sessions per RSA 91-A:3, II (a).

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the agenda as presented, as amended. All approved 2-0.

3. Other Business:
  - a. Opening of Water System Bids: County Administrator Jennifer Fish introduced Allison from Underwood Engineers. The bids were opened, reviewed for completeness and read as follows:

Bidder	Total Base Bid	Add Alt
JP Sicard	482,926.00	10,000.00
Dawson's Excavating	522,347.82	15,500.00

Allison stated that all information must be submitted to DES for review prior to the Board of Commissioners making final approval.

Everyone pertaining to the water system bids left the meeting.

- b. Awarding of Wentworth Location Riverbank Proposal to Northern New England Field Services, LLC (NNEFS)/Dennis Thompson: County Administrator Jennifer Fish presented the contract proposal to the Board. The total cost indicated was \$50,000 with a \$20,000 deposit due upon signing of the contract. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to award the contract to Northern New England Field Services, LLC at a total cost of \$50,000. All approved 2-0. The contract and a special use permit from the USFWS were signed by the Chair.
  - c. County Treasurer Sue Collins had two items to discuss with the Board:

- Ms. Collins reported that she had met with Representative Robert Th  berge at the NHAC Conference to discuss the DHHS request of 50% of the excess proshare funds for IDN funding. Ms. Collins provided the following information which she would be presenting to the Delegation at the 1:00 p.m. meeting.

*ProShare Payments to New Hampshire's Counties increased a great deal this year. Some 10-12 years ago the counties argued with the State of NH that legitimate nursing home expenditure deficits were going unmatched by federal dollars. The NH Association of Counties hired Washington consultants to produce the data to justify the case for **Certified Public Expenditures**. These efforts fell on deaf ears at NH Department of Health & Human Services (and perhaps at the federal level).*

*As recently as last year, NH DHHS filed a Demo Waiver with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid for Delivery System Reform Incentive Payment. The 5-year waiver was approved by the feds. The funding under this waiver finally recognizes certified public expenditures being funded by the County homes.*

*As a result of the approved waiver, the 2018 ProShare Payments to Counties reflected increased federal matching funds.*

*My argument is that Co  s County should keep a very large percentage of the so-called windfall being requested by DHHS to fund IDN 7 due to the property tax commitment in our county versus the 9 other counties in this state. The following 2017 chart published by the NH Department of Revenue Administration (ORA) depicts the average county tax effort versus total tax effort by counties in New Hampshire:*

County	2017 Total Tax Rate Per Thousand (Average for All Towns in the County)	County Tax Rate as a% of Total Rate	Amount of Funding Requested by DHHS at 50% of ProShare Increase
Belknap	\$18.74	6.52%	\$1,339,515
Carroll	\$13.27	10.73%	\$166,210
Cheshire	\$28.89	12.13%	\$612,439
Co��s	<b>\$24.41</b>	<b>19.82%</b>	<b>\$695,700</b>
Grafton	\$22.03	8.54%	\$287,234
Hillsborough	\$24.00	5.42%	\$4,199,571
Merrimack	\$25.78	11.42%	\$947,549
Rockingham	\$20.03	5.18%	\$1,180,308
Strafford	\$26.73	10.36%	\$1,277,812
Sullivan	\$25.88	11.39%	\$1,417,819

- ✓ *It is clear that property taxpayers in Co  s County have a county tax effort that is almost 4 times what it is in Rockingham and Hillsborough Counties.*
- ✓ *It is also clear that Co  s County gets a higher amount of Proshare than its wealthier neighbors in Carroll and Grafton Counties because the Medicaid case load in Co  s County is larger than our neighboring counties.*

*Therefore, members of the Delegation, Co  s County has the highest county tax effort in the*

state half of which is due to the losses in our nursing homes that have some of the heaviest Medicaid caseloads in the State. The 2018 budgeted deficit for the two nursing homes was \$9,102,400 less \$2,000,000 Proshare leaving a nursing home funding gap of \$7,102,400 to be funded by property taxes.

I just signed the 2018 County Tax bills to the towns and City totaling \$15,573,805, an increase of \$489,018 over 2017.

Although the IDN 5-year demonstration project is admirable, I support providing some support for the IDN's but at a level no higher than our neighbors in Carroll and Grafton Counties - **perhaps \$165,000 (as in Carroll County) to \$280,000 (as Grafton County).**

Please remember that IDN 7 encompasses a large geographic area and a sparse population concentrated in approximately 7 sub-regions mostly centered around the hub towns of Berlin, Colebrook, Conway, Lancaster, Littleton, North Haverhill and Wolfeboro.

I canvassed the commitments to DHHS to date by New Hampshire's counties. Here is a summary:

County	Commitment as of September 25, 2018
Belknap	Meeting this week; no decision yet.
Carroll	Delegation voted to return 50%; Commissioners voted not to return the money at this point.
Cheshire	Voted to send \$578,756 a bit shy of the requested \$612,439
Coös	
Grafton	No information received.
Hillsborough	No information received.
Merrimack	Plans to return \$947,549 sometime this year.
Rockingham	Has not met with DHHS yet; has not voted.
Strafford	Voted to send \$1,277,812.
Sullivan	Voted to send 50% \$1,417,819

Ms. Collins also noted that the two nursing homes have paid \$114,533 in bed tax on the proshare received. Coös County cannot afford to be a donor town for the IDN program. No one in the area has a grasp of the services offered in this area. A majority of the services are offered in Carroll and Grafton counties.

- Ms. Collins presented a second document (*copy on file*) pertaining to her view on the current HR position. She stated that on a couple of occasions Commissioner Samson has commented that Coös County is the only county that does not have a human resource director.

While attending the NHAC Conference, Ms. Collins reported that she was invited to a luncheon meeting of the NHAC Human Resource Affiliate where members shared their HR backgrounds. She also stated that some members offered to speak to the Board on behalf of the position.

She urged the Board to provide the HR Coordinator with funds to keep growing in the field by giving her the opportunity to take advantage of course offerings.

Commissioner Brady asked the County Administrator to send copies of the items distributed by Ms. Collins to Commissioner Samson.

- d. *Coös Bay, Oregon/Coös County, New Hampshire - Solar Eclipse 2023-2024*: Commissioner Grenier reported that he had received an email from a group promoting the first in the nation solar eclipse. This group selected Coös Bay, Oregon with the solar eclipse occurring October 14, 2023 and Coös County, NH with the solar eclipse occurring April 8, 2024.

The County Administrator will research the event further and report back to the Board at the October 10 meeting. Commissioner Grenier stated that he would forward to her the information and also suggested providing the information to the local Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to the nonpublic session, Laura Mills, NHA, provided an update on the air conditioning unit for the kitchen per Commissioner Samson's request. Ms. Mills has spoken with the Plant Operator who does not believe that either proposed systems will work in the kitchen. He is currently researching an HVAC system with an estimated cost of \$20,000. Ms. Mills suggested encumbering the current funds for this year and budgeting additional funds in 2019.

- e. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to enter into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) at 11:45 a.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to come out of nonpublic session at 12:00 p.m. All approved 2-0.

Louise Belanger NHA, left the meeting.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to enter into nonpublic session per RSA 91-A:3, II (a) at 12:00 p.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to come out of nonpublic session at 12:13 p.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to seal the minutes. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to adjourn the meeting at 12:13 p.m. All approved 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Harris, Acting Clerk