

Coös County Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH  
March 11, 2020 (*amended April 8, 2020*)

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady and Paul Grenier; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede; Captain Keith Roberge; County Treasurer Sue Collins; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Chief Phil Cloutier/Gorham Fire and EMS; and, Denise Vallee, Town of Gorham.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:15 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner Grenier led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the agenda, as presented. All approved 2-0.
3. Approval of the Minutes from the February 18, 2020, special meeting, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2020, special meeting, as presented. All approved 2-0.
4. Approval of Payrolls and Disbursements: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the Payrolls and Disbursements for the month of February and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of March, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 2-0.
5. Correspondence: There was no correspondence to report.
6. Hearing of the Public:
  - a. Chief Phil Cloutier from Gorham Fire and EMS presented and reviewed the 2020 Public Safety Agreement between Coös County and Gorham in the amount of \$15,200; and the 2020 Emergency Medical Services Agreement with a five year scheduled incremental increase.

Chief Cloutier explained that the department is looking for a percentage of the total cost instead of a per call basis. The cost includes not only that the department responds but is always ready to respond.

Commissioner Grenier stated that he had great difficulty in signing a five year agreement. He asked for a report with actual costs to include medical data, what type of calls and the offset revenue. He continued that the Unincorporated Places should not have to pay for "what ifs". He agreed to pay the agreement for 2020. Commissioner Grenier asked for quarterly reports from the department.

The County Administrator stated that the amount of the Public Safety Agreement presented at the meeting had an additional \$1,200 included. Chief Cloutier replied that this was an error and would forward a corrected copy.

Chief Cloutier stated that he would forward corrected copies of both agreements to Ms. Fish, submit quarterly reports on activity and will also have budgeted figures to the Board by August 1.

7. Report of the County Administrator Jennifer Fish. A report was not submitted to the Board.

At the meeting, the County Administrator reported that the Delegation's Budget Work Session on Saturday, March 7 did not have a quorum. The discussions included the Department of Corrections and the 2019 IDN funding.

The County Administrator requested a non-meeting to discuss collective bargaining.

8. Report of the Superintendent of Corrections Ben Champagne. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

<b>TOTAL IN FACILITY</b>	<b>25</b>
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	10
PRETRIAL	15
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	2
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	4
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	1
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0
FURLOUGH	0
HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	GRAFTON DOC: 2 HOC FEMALE, 4 PT FEMALE HILLSBOROUGH DOC: 1 PT MALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION FEBRUARY	26
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY FEBRUARY	713
FEMALE DAYS SERVED FEBRUARY	133 (11 females)
FEDERAL INMATE DAYS SERVED FEBRUARY	0
TOTAL INMATES BOOKED FEBRUARY	23
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED FEBRUARY	18

- a. Over the past month we have been dealing extensively with an offender who has very serious medical issues. This offender has been incredibly difficult to house and treat due to the seriousness of his medical issues. The Coös County Attorney's office has assented to a motion to allow this offender while being hospitalized to be released from Coös County DOC custody on personal recognizance bail. This has been incredibly helpful for the DOC and the Coös County Sheriff's Department. At the time of this report that offender is receiving treatment at a local hospital at his own expense. The Sheriff's Department, County Attorney and the jail will continue to monitor and work through this unique situation.
- b. Case Management services have been going very well. This program has already significantly demonstrated its value to the offenders and their pursuit of a successful re-entry into the community.
- c. Suicide Prevention and Emergency Restraint Chair (ERC) training was held over the month of February.
- d. On February 27, 2020 two inmates working at the Coös County Recycling Center found a wallet belonging to a lady from Colebrook, NH. The wallet was found in a bin of newspaper that had been collected from the Colebrook Transfer Station. The two inmates that discovered the wallet

immediately notified Community Programs Corporal Jamie Lesperance of what they had found. The wallet contained over \$600 in cash, a key fob said to have cost \$600 to replace, credit cards and an irreplaceable sentimental family item. I am pleased to report to the Board of Commissioners that all of these items were returned to the rightful owner. I received a telephone call from the lady stating how appreciative she was that these items were returned to her. I think it is worth noting that in a place where the preconceived judgment of the typical offender may not always be the highest, kindness and good judgment is present in many.

- e. Superintendent Champagne presented to the Board a copy of the statement that he had presented to the Delegation members at the Budget Work Session. He requested that the information be included in the minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to include the Superintendent's statement in the minutes. All approved 2-0.

*I would like to take an opportunity to provide an informational overview of the current staffing makeup at the Coös County Department of Corrections. When considering how a facility is staffed, it is important to understand the basic requirements of the jail. The jail must be staffed on a 24-hour-seven-day-a-week basis. At no point is the jail in a position to not be staffed. That may seem like trivial information but it is often overlooked. The national average says it takes five staff members to cover one position that operates on a seven-day, 24 hour basis. Keeping in mind that any particular shift may have staff vacancies, off days, vacations, training, etc. Coös County Department of Corrections operates significantly below this average with two staff members covering that one 24 hour position. The jail also has in place ranked shifts. This is necessary for effective supervision and oversight of jail operations. A common misconception is that detention is our sole duty when running the facility. The jail by state statute is obligated to provide a number of different services, to include medical-care for incarcerated offenders. The Coös County jail has three full time medical professionals, covering two shifts-7 days per week. The jail has 16 security staff positions. I will give extra emphasis on the word "positions". I do this because we are not at full staff. Currently, the jail only has 14 security staff positions filled. Security staff refers to staff members that are certified corrections officers within the rank system. The jail also employs two corrections staff members that work exclusive to outside programs, operating the grounds crew and Coös County Recycling Center. The only other position is the superintendent of corrections. This brings a total of 20 staff members to date. However, keep in mind there are major differences in the functions that these staff members do between the different positions.*

*I noticed some public comments made at the February 21, 2020 Coös County Delegation Quarterly that I feel need clarification. It was stated that the Coös County DOC has "23 inmates and 22 staff; so there is one guard per inmate. The average is 3.5 guards per inmate." The ratio that was cited as 3.5 guards per inmate is inaccurate and is actually backwards. The national average ranges between 3.3 to 6.7 INMATES to one (1) CORRECTIONS OFFICER. Coös County had an average daily population (ADP) of 26 in the month of February, 2020. The department has on most days, three staff members working. One of those staff members MUST remain in the corrections control center at all times, no exceptions. That leaves two staff members to deal with 26 inmates. This is a ratio of 13 inmates-to-one officer. I certainly think it is worthwhile noting this is considerably higher than the national average of 3.3 inmates to (1) one officer. I also think it is noteworthy to consider that this number is down from years past when the ADP was between 40-50 inmates. Staff were subjected to ratios of 22+ inmates to (1) officer.*

*As for the security staff that makes up for the “bulk” of the employed staff, there is a minimum number of staff that it takes to staff a shift. For Coös County it has been established that a minimum of three staff members must be present to cover a shift. The minimum of three applies to all three shifts. As I stated previously most days the department runs at the bare minimum, on occasion it exceeds that by one or two. All corrections facilities have an established minimum number of staff that is required to fill a shift. Every facility is different in how they determine that minimum. If the minimum number of staff for a particular shift cannot be met, there will be mandatory overtime to fill that position. These minimums are established through an analysis of operations, duties, population, operational philosophy and building layout. An ongoing hardship for Coös County is that we are almost always staffed at our minimum. This creates efficiency issues and can be exhausting for staff covering shifts, nights and weekends. However, the staff members are unbelievably resilient and carry on with full resolve. They always find a way to balance the operational needs of the facility, while ensuring that they are providing the highest level of service to the offenders, the criminal justice system and the Coös County taxpayers. That is something that I am very proud of.*

*In closing I would ask that you consider the operational philosophy of the Coös County Department of Corrections. That philosophy is about finding balance in all areas of incarceration, not just detention. There are many facets of the jail that need to be accomplished in a given day. A major part of our philosophy is recognizing our obligation to provide the highest quality detention practices to ensure public safety. Providing custody over our offenders is paramount, but it is not the only obligation we have. Providing medical, psychological, educational and treatment options to our offenders is of the highest importance to us also. We are legally and morally responsible for the care, custody and control over our inmate population and it will continue to be of the highest importance to everyone here at the Coös County Department of Corrections. I absolutely welcome all members of the Coös County Delegation to stop by and review operations first hand. I am confident you will be as proud of the operations and staff as I am.*

9. Report of the West Stewartstown Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

- a. Census: The census was 76. Occupancy for the month of February was 90% based on a bed count of 85. In February, one (1) admission, no (0) discharges and five (5) deaths.

Staff has been working on six (6) admissions, but NH Medicaid is causing delays as staff waits for approval. If we do not wait for the approval, we may lose up to 14 days of pay or risk a last minute denial resulting in not being paid at all.

Of the 76 residents, thirteen (13) are Private Pay, eleven (11) residents are Vermont Medicaid, six (6) residents are Medicaid Pending, (four for NH and two for VT.) In many instances, residents are dying while on Medicaid Pending. Once they die, the state closes the case without paying. The Social Services Director and Resident Accounts have scheduled monthly telephone meetings with NH Medicaid to work through these cases. It continues to be a struggle. The NH Medicaid offices are overworked, understaffed, and disorganized. Resident Accounts and Social Services continue putting many hours in every week attempting to get the backlog of issues corrected. Totals for 2020: Three (3) admissions, six (6) deaths, and one (1) discharge.

b. Staffing:

The Nursing Department has 116 hours open for RN/LPN (2.9 FTE). Two (2) contract LPNs are covering some hours. There are 368 open LNA hours (9.2 FTE). One 32 hour LNA and one 36 hour LNA are out on Workers Comp and one on FMLA. Six (6) contract LNAs are covering some of the hours.

c. LNA and MNA Classes: The 4<sup>th</sup> High School LNA Class is well on its way. Graduation will be held on June 7, 2020.

The Nursing Hospital is hoping to run another MNA Class early this spring.

The Staff Development Director submitted her resignation effective April 17. Thankfully, she is willing to stay on as a temp to complete the current LNA class, run the MNA Class, and train her replacement. The position is posted in house and a strong candidate has applied.

At the meeting, the Nursing Hospital Administrator announced that the employee had rescinded her resignation.

d. IT: Staff continue working through many IT issues with SNS and printer issues with Porter Office.

e. Facility Issues:

- Contractors continue working on switching the sprinkler system over to W. Stewartstown water.
- There has been some leaking from the new hot water brazed exchangers. Plumbers from DHI were on site for two days correcting the issue.

f. QAPI: Staff continues to make progress on the QAPI Plan for the new regulations. Staff also continues to work on the PIPs for SBAR and Communication and for making the admissions process smoother.

g. Family/Resident/Staff Concerns: No Ombudsman Reports were filed in February.

h. Coronavirus/Influenza: Staff continue to monitor residents, staff and visitors for symptoms of illness. The facility remains at an elevated level of alert, but no change in operations at this time.

i. Survey: Survey arrived on February 11 and exited on February 14. This was just two days short of the 15 month limit. It was an excellent survey and the Nursing Hospital was DEFICIENCY-FREE for Quality of Life/Quality of Care. The Nursing Hospital Administrator requested the Survey Bonus be paid to staff. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to authorize the payment of the survey bonus. All approved 2-0.

The Life Safety Survey was done on February 14. Although initially staff was told there would be no deficiencies, the Deficiency Statement received noted one fire door that did not latch securely and one alcohol based hand rub dispenser that was installed too close to a light switch. Both issues were quickly corrected.

- j. Dentist: The search still continues for replacement dental services for the residents. Currently, residents are being assessed by their PCP and seen by area dentists as needed. The nursing home is paying the dental bills.
- k. Committee Reports:
  - NHAC Executive Committee: The next meeting is scheduled for March 6, 2020.
  - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate: The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2020.
  - Workforce Development: No new meetings have been set.
  - UCVH Board of Directors: March 26, 2020.

l. Nursing Hours at the Department of Corrections:

	2019	2020
	Minutes	Minutes
January	59	2
February	5	69
March	53	

10. Report of the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

- a. Census: The current census was 96; Private Pay 14; Medicaid Pending 0; and Hospice 1. Average daily census for January was 95; Admissions 4; Deaths 5; Discharges 14. Year to date average daily census was 95.
- b. SNF/RNP/CMI: Part A 11; Part B 20; PT 5; OT 9; ST 8. Case Mix Index (CMI) increased from 0.9818 to 1.0206, and anticipate higher by the time all charts are closed next week. This has taken a lot of hard work from all disciplines in the nursing home. Special recognition was made to HealthPro Heritage, Scott Pontti and his team of therapist, as well as the nursing home interdisciplinary team in completing off-cycle quarterlies to get us here.
- c. Nursing Shortage: Open positions increased for both: RN/LPN 13.3 FTEs; LNA 25.3 FTEs. Agency contracts fill some of the open hours: LPN 7; RN 1; LNA 5
- d. LNA Program: CCNH-Berlin Training Program is pending completion for submission.
- e. QAPI: Process improvement projects, to include: Weight Loss; State Mandated Reports – two; Medications; Exit Interviews; Music and Memory Program; Wheelchairs; Antibiotic Stewardship; Care Planning; Employee Retention – *CMS Employee Satisfaction Survey implemented*; Dementia Training.
- f. COVID-19: DHHS Health Alert #6. A family letter was mailed and posted on the website. Postings at main entrance, screening of all visitors and staff, public meetings for March have been moved to non-healthcare locations. The facility is currently at Level Yellow. Should the facility be required to move into Level Orange, the nursing home will need to further restrict access to the facility. Resident Council has held a special meeting to receive updates. Regular updates are provided by the Infection Preventionist and other key personnel in the nursing home, and staff is in active communication with DHHS who are leading the way. Teleconference on 3/6/2020 with Androscoggin Valley Healthcare Leaders. Practice of cough etiquette and

hand hygiene is encouraged, if fever, cough or sore throat then self-isolate. Monitor CDC website for restricted travel areas.

- g. Budget/Financials/Payroll: Payroll teleconference with Carrie Klebe - next meeting pending. BMSI software updates pending for new weighted overtime calculation. Retirement NHRS was completed timely.
- h. Dietary Department Food Steamer/Kettle: All avenues are being exhausted, manufacturer and distributor have been provided pictures of failed manufacturer weld and PO's for all repairs since purchase. Anticipated cost to replace is approximately \$20,000, not including installation fees.

At the meeting, the Director of Finance suggested adding the cost to the nursing home's 2020 budget. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to urge the Delegation to act upon the purchase of the steamer/kettle immediately. All approved 2-0. Commissioner Grenier stated that he would discuss the need to the Delegation at the budget meeting.

- i. Request for Non-Public: The Nursing Home Administrator had two concerns to discuss, per Title VI, Chapter 91-A:3 II (c).
- j. Meetings/Committee Reports:
  - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate: Next meeting 3/12/20 – Belknap County Nursing Home; Executive Committee unable to attend the March 6 meeting.
  - AVH Extended Care Meeting: 3/17/20
  - NHAC HR Affiliate: Danielle Rioux attending
  - NHAC Billing Affiliate: Vicky Nason and Jane Ryan attending 4/24/20 – Merrimack County

11. Report of the Director of Finance Carrie Klebe. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

- a. Documents for the Tax Anticipation Note were presented for review and signatures. Commissioner Brady, Commissioner Grenier and County Treasurer Sue Collins signed the documents.
- b. Vachon Clukay & Company PC are immersed in financials for the 2019 Financial Audit. The audit team has been working remotely since the weeklong visit in February. This work will continue over the next month.
- c. The Department of Health and Human Services began its yearly desk audit of the WSNH 2018 Medicaid Cost Report on February 4.
- d. In regards to the issue with Bangor Savings Bank and Passumpsic Bank not being in compliance with the NH State Statute **Update:** This has become a bill, HB 1119, which is currently in the Senate. There seems to be good support for this bill, so we are hopeful it will move forward. We are continuing to use Bangor Savings Bank in Colebrook and Passumpsic Bank in Lancaster.

- e. NH Government Finance Officers Association: The Director of Finance attended the March 3 Executive Committee Meeting in Concord.
- f. Bangor Savings Bank offered a Business Security Seminar on February 27 at the Tillotson Center. The Director of Finance attended along with the County Treasurer.
- g. Funding to the State of NH for IDN 7: The NH Association of Counties has formulated the Memo of Understanding for the DSRIP Waiver or Building Capacity for Transformation Waiver and the Standardized Reporting sheet. Coös County has received a request from the State of NH DHHS for the 2019 donation of \$192,408, which was not included in the 2019 budget.
- h. The Director of Finance stated that the Board needed to take action with unexpended farm funds in the amount of \$31,479.30. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to recommend to the Delegation to transfer unexpended farm funds to the undesignated fund balance. All approved 2-0.

12. Report of the HR Coordinator Julie Brunault. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

HR Activity Report: 2/01/2020 – 2/29/2020

a. New Hires: 7

Department:	#	Positions
Nursing Home	2 (1 FT, 1Temp)	LNA, UA
Nursing Hospital	5 (1 FT, 2 PT, 2 Temps)	1 LPN, 3 LNA's, 1 Hskp Aide

b. Separations: 15

Department:	#	
Nursing Home	13 (2 PT, 11 Temp)	4 RN, 1 LPN, 3 LNA, 1 UA, 2 LA/Hskp, 1 DA, 1 HIC
Nursing Hospital	2 (1 PT, 1 Temp)	MNA, LNA

c. Change in Status: 2

Department:	#	
Nursing Home	2 (PT)	RN, LNA

d. Reasons for separation/ Change of status:

- 1 new employment
- 10 did not meet job requirements (*employees who previously resigned and requested to remain on as "Temps"*)
- 2 personal
- 1 retirement
- 1 relocating
- 2 secondary employment (Coos) conflicting with primary employment

e. FMLA/Leave of absences/ADA/WC:

Nursing Home	16
Nursing Hospital	8



- f. On Friday, February 21, 2020, Danielle Rioux and I attended the HR Affiliate meeting in Concord, NH. Steve McKinney from the US Department of Labor was the guest speaker informing the HR group on the new regulations. In April both facilities have registered to attend the New Hampshire Department of Labor informational session at the Gorham Town Hall.
- g. Next scheduled HR meeting is March 20, 2020 in Concord.

13. Commissioners' Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

14. Other Business:

- a. Budget Transfers: There were no budget transfers.
- b. Tax Anticipation Notes: The Board signed the documents earlier in the meeting.
- c. Certificate of Authority - County Attorney: The County Administrator reported that the County Attorney required a resolution and vote from the Board in order to proceed with grant applications for the department. Ms. Fish read the following:

*That John McCormick, Coös County Attorney, is duly authorized to enter into contracts or agreements on behalf of Coös County with the State of New Hampshire and any of its agencies or departments and further is authorized to execute any documents which may in his judgment be desirable or necessary to effect the purpose of this vote.*

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to approve the resolution as presented. All approved 2-0. The Chair signed the resolution.

- d. SNS IT Contract: The County Administrator presented the SNS support contract for the years 2020-2021. A request was presented to waive the bid the process and to authorize the County Administrator to execute the contract after the budget meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to waive the bid process and authorize the County Administrator to execute the contract after the budget meeting. All approved 2-0.

15. Unincorporated Places:

- a. Approval of CAI - Tax Map Maintenance Contract: The Board approved and signed the CAI Tax Maintenance contract.
- b. Authorization to contract for mortgage searches for the 2019 tax liens: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to authorize Linda Harris to contract for mortgage searches for the 2019 tax liens. All approved 2-0.
- c. 2019 Abatement Applications: Linda Harris presented three abatement applications to the Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to forward the applications to the assessors for review. All approved 2-0.
- d. Yield Tax Warrant Millsfield: The Board signed the yield tax warrant and certification in the amount of \$5,250.

16. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 10:07 a.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to come out of non-public session at 10:19 a.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to enter a non-meeting to discuss collective bargaining at 10:19 a.m. All approved 2-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to come out of the non-meeting at 10:30. All approved 2-0.

The April meeting will be held April 8, 2020 at the North Country Resource Center in Lancaster, NH beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Brady to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 a.m. All approved 2-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Harris, Administrative Assistant