

Coös County Commissioners
Special Meeting
Meeting held remotely in accordance with the
Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04,
April 20, 2020

As Chair of the Coös County Commissioners, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Coös County Commissioners have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing the following phone # # 1-646-558-8656 and meeting ID # 848 9993 5025, or by clicking on the following website address: www.zoom.us/join

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Coös County Commissioners at: www.cooscountynh.us

If anybody has a problem, please call 246-3321 Ext. 1211 or email at: jennifer.fish@cooscountynh.us

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled. Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states their presence, please also state whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know law.

The following individuals were in attendance remotely: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Brendan Prusik, UNH Cooperative Extension Service; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 10:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the agenda, as presented. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

3. Approval of the Minutes from the April 8, 2020, regular meeting, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2020, regular meeting. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

4. Other Business:

- a. Discussion of County Farm Forestry Plan: Brendan Prusik, County Forester, had three items to discuss with the Board:
- He is working on preparing a timber harvest that would occur once markets improve. The area being considered is north of Back Pond road and intends to salvage high risk and mature balsam fir before the timber is lost to blow-down and decay. This operation is proposed to use the entrance to the first field on Back Pond road and perhaps a second yard on the water supply road off route 3.
 - NH Fish and Game (NHFG) is interested in treatments that would enhance bird hunting on the county farm. The specific bird species include woodcock and ruffed grouse. NHFG is willing to pay the county to hire a contractor to cut about 10-15 acres of alders and poplar in patches throughout the ownership, north of Back Pond Road. The only requirement to the County would be to continue allowing hunting on the property. Recognizing the opportunity, Mr. Prusik contacted NHFG to see if they were willing to fund this enhancement. Most of the work will be done adjacent to areas where balsam fir will be harvested later.
 - Similar to Tamworth Distillery's work in 2016, a farmer from Stratford has asked to harvest balsam poplar buds on the county farm as trial for new business venture. Mr. Prusik supported the requested and suggested that it be completed in concert with the NHFG habitat enhancement work. However, some of this work would commence within the week before the buds become leaves (before the other habitat work is done).

Mr. Prusik noted that the projects in order of importance were as follows: the request from the Stratford farmer; the NHFG patches; and the continued work on the proposed timber harvest.

Commissioner Grenier asked about the condition of the fir trees. Mr. Prusik explained that one does not typically know about the condition of the wood until it is cut but he estimated that 50% was sound wood. He did not have estimated board feet information. Commissioner Brady verified that the NHFG was willing to fund the clearing of the patches. Mr. Prusik replied yes. Commissioner Samson asked about the size of the patch cuts. Mr. Prusik replied the patch for the aspen will need to be large enough to regenerate - about two acres. The patches for the alders will be smaller (less than one acre) and responds well to wet soils.

Mr. Prusik stated that the proposed log yard could interfere with Scott Deblois depending on the time of year. He presented another option where a log yard could be built but the cost to build the yard would come out of the timber harvest.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to allow the County Forester Brendan Prusik to begin the implementation of the bud work and to continue with the plan presented to the Board. Certificates of insurance will be provided to the County prior to the start of the projects. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

Mr. Prusik will continue to work on creating a county forest plan.

- b. *LTC Stabilization Program/Supplemental Budget:* County Administrator Jennifer Fish reported that both nursing homes had completed and filed applications with the State. Full time employees would be compensated \$300 and part time employees \$150 per week. The program goes through June 30. Ms. Fish continued that the program creates a budget issue as the funds are not included in the budget. Director of Finance Carrie Klebe contacted the auditors for guidance. The auditors advised that a supplemental budget would be needed to accept and appropriate the funds.

Commissioner Grenier noted that the revenue will come from the State but employees will be paid through payroll. Ms. Fish stated that NH Retirement will not be taken out of these funds but payroll taxes will. Commissioner Grenier stated that he did not support passing off the expense to the county taxpayers. The Director of Finance reported that the payroll taxes on a \$300 paycheck will be about \$22.95. Ms. Fish further added that if any employee has overtime, it will be factored in as well. Commissioner Grenier estimated that for a twelve week period the payroll taxes for both nursing homes would be \$175,000.

The Director of Finance also informed the Board that the Berlin Nursing Home received unbudgeted Medicare Cares Act funds from the Federal government. This amount was \$102,450. However, the bed tax of 5.5% will need to be paid which was estimated at \$5,800. She suggested using the remainder of the funds, \$78,350, to offset the payroll taxes.

Commissioner Brady asked how many employees would be receiving the \$300 and how many would be receiving the \$150. Laura Mills, NHA, replied that that may depend on the hours worked during the week meaning if a part-time employee works more hours the employee will be eligible for the \$300. Commissioner Brady asked for an estimated breakdown from each of the nursing homes.

Commissioner Grenier stated that if the Berlin Nursing Home funds were used to offset the estimated payroll taxes, there would still be \$80,000 to offset. Commissioner Brady asked administration to review both nursing home budgets to find funds to offset the remaining cost. Another meeting could be set up during the week. Commissioner Grenier stated that an answer will be needed prior to the Delegation meeting on Friday. A plan must be presented to the Delegation.

- c. *COLA increase for Coös County Deputy Attorneys:* The County Administrator requested the 1.5% COLA for the Deputy Attorneys in the County Attorney's office. The cost of living was included in the approved budget. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the cost of living increase for the Coös County Deputy Attorneys. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

- d. *Non-Meeting- AFSCME Negotiations:* A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into a non-meeting per RSA 91-A 2 I (b) at 10:36 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of the non-meeting at 10:57 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to accept and recommend to the Delegation the cost items relating to AFSCME Council 93 Local 3421:

| | |
|--|------------|
| Salaries and Health Insurance FY2020 | 223,847 |
| Salaries and Health Insurance Savings FY2021 | (\$30,100) |
| Salaries and Health Insurance Savings FY2022 | (\$27,719) |

The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

- e. *Other:* Commissioner Samson stated that he had received a copy of the letter provided to employees a few weeks ago explaining the determination of eligibility for employees out of work during COVID19. The letter stated that the County Commissioners had decided on the criteria where certain employees were eligible and others were not. He asked when this was discussed as he did not recall the discussion and why certain employees were excluded. Commissioner Grenier replied that a discussion was held at a previous public meeting. The County Administrator replied that the 80 hours of paid time does not apply to essential employees and employees who become ill must use sick time. The Administrators determined who were/were not essential employees.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:09 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|
| Commissioner Grenier | Yes | Commissioner Samson | Yes | Commissioner Brady | Yes |
|----------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Rick Samson, Clerk