

Coös County Commissioners
Special Meeting
Meeting held remotely in accordance with the
Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04,
May 29, 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 # 857 3135 2080 password 649868, 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; Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; and members of the press.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:00 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
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3. *Approval of the Minutes from the May 22, 2020, special meeting, as presented:* A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2020, special meeting. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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4. *Other Business:*

- a. Discussion of the temporary health partner proposal: Laura Mills stated that the individual in this position would assist a licensed nursing assistant. No license is required for this position. The position is needed during the State of Emergency. It would give all departments to help, if needed.

Lynn Beede, NHA, added that this would give people who have not worked in health care access to this field. This opportunity would also allow cross-training of unlicensed staff in the facility.

Commissioner Grenier inquired who would be the responsible party to oversee the work of these individuals. Ms. Mills replied that these individuals should be working with licensed nursing assistants. No tasks requiring a license will be assigned. Commissioner Grenier stated that if DONs were in support, he would support as well.

Commissioner Samson asked if people from other departments would be pulled. Ms. Mills replied that it was one of the intentions but work will need to be prioritized. She also noted that if for example, a housekeeper were doing this job, the individual would be paid at the higher rate of pay of the two positions. The proposed salary would be the activities aide II wage which is between the unit aide and licensed nursing assistant wages. Commissioner Grenier stated that this would financially impact the facilities. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to support the implementation of the Temporary Health Partner at the activities aide II wage level. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- b. Mandatory COVID-19 testing for employees: County Administrator Jennifer Fish reported that all residents in both nursing homes had been tested and the employees were next. She asked if the testing of employees could be mandatory.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the employees are working in a health care facility. The test should be mandatory for all nursing home employees, Department of Corrections employees and all individuals that enter the facilities. This is for the safety of facility and of themselves. Commissioner Samson also agreed with the mandatory testing. It is for the safety of the residents and themselves.

Ms. Fish asked what would the consequences be for any individual who refuses. Commissioner Grenier stated that it is a condition of employment now through September. The employee would be suspended without pay. Commissioner Brady noted that these are life and death situations. There is no choice.

Superintendent Champagne agreed with the County Administrator. He wants all of his employee tested but there may be an employee who may decline. He has employees that are

members of a collective bargaining agreement. He asked if a generic policy stating that the testing is mandatory with consequences for refusal. He asked for something in writing to hand to employees.

Ms. Mills stated that she had contacted legal counsel at Primex³ inquiring if it was legal to make the testing a condition of employment. She was informed that it is within the facility's rights to do so. The initial test with a mobile unit is scheduled for next week. Testing should occur every 10 days. She would like follow up testing to be done in-house.

Commissioner Brady asked if the county staff working in the nursing home will be tested as well. Ms. Mills replied that anyone who works or enters the nursing home will be tested.

Captain Roberge asked that the members of the Sheriff's Department including the Administrative Assistant could be added to the testing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to require as a condition of employment COVID19 testing as required by the CDC and State of New Hampshire for anyone working and entering the Berlin and West Stewartstown Nursing Homes, Department of Corrections and Sheriff's Department (including the Administrative Assistant). This policy will be revisited September 1, 2020. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- c. GOFERR application: The County Administrator reported that the application is due Monday, June 1. She asked if the Board would authorize her to sign the application on their behalf. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to authorize the County Administrator Jennifer Fish to sign the GOFERR application on the Board's behalf.

Commissioner Samson inquired if the new position approved earlier in the meeting would be reimbursable by GOFERR. Ms. Mills replied that the expense must prove that it is COVID related. The Director of Finance noted that the position was not part of the approved budget. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- d. Commissioner Grenier referred to the email received from the Director of Finance regarding the extension of the electric contract from Freedom Energy Logistics for an addition of 11 months (December 2023 - November 2024) at a rate of .07099/kWh. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to extend the contract as proposed at a rate of .07099/kWh. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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Commissioner Samson reported that he had delivered the clock to retired employee Carolyn McQuiston.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 9:40 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Rick Samson, Clerk