

A Checklist To Ensure Meetings Are Compliant  
With The Right-to-Know Law During The State Of Emergency  
Regular Commissioners Meeting  
November 12, 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 or by clicking on the following website address: [www.zoom.us/join](http://www.zoom.us/join). The meeting ID is # 839 4239 8105 passcode 634492.

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](http://www.cooscountynh.us)

If anybody has a problem, please call 603-331-5670 or email at: [jennifer.fish@cooscountynh.us](mailto: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; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills (*joined at 9:11 a.m.*); Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; County Treasurer Sue Collins; Representative Troy Merner; Senator-Elect Erin Hennessey; Anna Cole, Drummond Woodsum; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; and members of the press.

Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners’ meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. 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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2. Approval of the Minutes from the November 4, 2020, budget work session, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the November 4, 2020, budget work session. 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 Payrolls and Disbursements: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the Payrolls and Disbursements for the month of October and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month November, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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4. Correspondence: There was no correspondence.

5. Report of the West Stewartstown Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills. There was no written report submitted.

The Nursing Hospital Administrator reported that the census was 65. There was a total of 33 staff and 26 residents that had tested positive. There were three deaths; two COVID related and one that was not.

The Board thanked Ms. Mills and members of her staff for their professionalism during this time of need. Her leadership will get them through this. The reports that are being provided are informative and heartwarming. Ms. Mills stated that staff has been amazing.

Senator-Elect Erin Hennessey asked if Ms. Mills had received any responses from emails submitted to the State requesting assistance of staff. She noted that she had followed up with the Governor earlier. Ms. Mills replied that she had not.

Ms. Mills reported that the facility was in need of N95 masks. All staff must be in full PPE. Commissioner Brady asked if any towns in Coös County had received N95s when PPE was distributed for the elections. Rep. Merner replied that he would contact someone in Lancaster. Sheriff Valerino stated that if any towns had supplies to be transported to the Nursing Hospital that the Sheriff's Department would take care of it. During the meeting, Ms. Mills was notified that the National Guard would be delivering N95s to the facility during the day. She thanked everyone for their assistance.

6. 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 84; Private Pay 19; Medicaid Pending 0; SNF: 6 and Hospice 1. The average daily census for October was 82.1; Admissions 8, Readmissions 2; Deaths 2; Discharges 5; Transfer out 2. Year to date average daily census 89.3.
- b. Nursing Shortage: Applications are being received for the open DON position. The Nursing Home continues to offer full scholarships for LNA programs. There were 26.5 FTEs open LNA positions at this time and RN/LPN positions have 9.7 FTEs open. The tuition loan program and

tuition reimbursement are both being utilized. There has also been some movement through Employment Security.

- c. COVID-19: The Nursing Home was in Phase 1, conducting indoor, outdoor, and compassionate care visits. **Staff: 1** (past positive 4; two past positives with two follow-up negative tests as well as a negative antibody test for both); **Residents: 0; Pending: 22 staff.** Staff education in process for POC testing, anticipated use of our BD Veritor antigen testing machine; all negative tests will require follow up PCR lab-based testing. At least weekly communication sent via email and/or letters to keep residents, families, and staff informed of COVID-19 status.
- d. Provider Relief Fund Phase 3 application submitted on 11/6/2020.
- e. QAPI: Process improvement projects, to include: COVID-19; Family Communication; Weight Loss; State Mandated Reports – **two**; Medications; Exit Interviews; Music and Memory Program (Tele); Wheelchairs; Antibiotic Stewardship; Care Planning; Employee Retention; Dementia Training.
- f. 2021 Budget: Ms. Beede requested permission to discuss Private Pay Rate.
- g. Request for Non-Public: Two concerns to discuss; per Title VI, Chapter 91-A:3 II (c).
- h. Building Repairs/Maintenance: SNS continues working in the background to upgrade IT and migrate old email files into Office 365. Commissioner Grenier and Mike Holt have met with HEB representative to discuss the four 1,000 gallon propane tanks located at the rear of the facility; engineering plans are needed; estimates are pending. The transit is set up to measure for tank movement within 1/16<sup>th</sup> of an inch; first measurement has been logged. Tanks are measured every seven days, if movement is observed Mike will increase monitoring frequency.
- i. Meetings/Committee Reports:
  - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate, DHHS and AV Workgroup: meeting minutes reviewed
  - Executive Committee –Monthly Zoom: meeting minutes reviewed
  - NHAC HR Affiliate: Danielle Rioux via Zoom
  - NHAC Billing Affiliate: Vicky Nason and Jane Ryan last attended September 2019; cancelled in January 2020 as well as April 2020. Next meeting TBD.
  - North Country Health Care Workforce Meeting - Zoom.
  - County Administrator Weekly Meeting each Wednesday at 11 am: Lynn & Danielle

7. 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>22</b>
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	11
PRETRIAL	11
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	1
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	4
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	0
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0
FURLOUGH	0

HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	GRAFTON DOC: 3 PT FEMALE, 2 HOC FEMALE MERRIMACK DOC: 1 PT MALE NHSP: 1 PT MALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION OCTOBER	21
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY OCTOBER	655
FEMALE DAYS SERVED OCTOBER	149 (11 females)
FEDERAL INMATE DAYS SERVED OCTOBER	0
TOTAL INMATES BOOKED OCTOBER	17
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED OCTOBER	15

- a. The annual budget meeting with the member towns that make up the Coös County Recycling Program was held on October 30, 2020. The member towns voted unanimously to approve the 2021 budget as presented.
- b. Due to the recent spike in COVID-19 cases around the county the Department of Corrections has gone back to tighter operational restrictions. These restrictions include no inmate visitations, no non-essential staff in the facility and mandatory wear of the KN95 mask rather than the traditional surgical facemask.
- c. Microsoft Office 365 email has gone live for all staff.
- d. With the recent spike in COVID-19 in the area, the Department of Corrections has been experiencing significant staffing issues. At this point, it has not been from positive COVID-19 cases, rather secondary exposure. The Superintendent requested a discussion on what options may be available to staff that are forced to quarantine due to a COVID-19 related issue. As the department progresses through this pandemic and screen staff it has never been clearer that staff being transparent and forthcoming about what they are personally experiencing is the best tool in keeping COVID-19 out of the facilities. With that said, the Superintendent expressed fear that staff will start to be reluctant on being forthcoming as they find themselves using their own personal and sick time during these times of quarantine. He asked to discuss the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) for consideration in helping with these issues.

The item was discussed under the County Administrator's report below.

8. Hearing of the Public: Anna Cole, Attorney from Drummond Woodsum. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into non-meeting per RSA 91-A:2 1(b) Consultation with legal counsel at 9:43 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of the non-meeting at 10:05 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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9. Report of the County Administrator Jennifer Fish. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

COUNTY

- a. Water System Update: The project is very close to being complete. AB Excavating will be in Stewartstown on Thursday to complete another open item.
- b. COVID-19 Testing policy: A draft policy has been prepared by Mark Broth.

Ms. Fish reported that a meeting was held between Attorney Mark Broth, Superintendent Champagne and herself. There are still some items that need to be clarified.

- c. SNS IT Update: SNS continues to work on the IT upgrade. The County Administrator received a quote for equipment required for the County Administration Office. The total cost for the house is \$7,000. Also, SNS has recommended that battery back-up equipment be purchased for all locations. The cost is \$14,500. The cost of the equipment can be combined with the current equipment lease. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the additional cost of \$21,500 to the current lease equipment. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- d. County House Renovation Update: The renovation is on track to be completed in December. The first floor rewiring has been completed and the interior drywall will be started next week.

The County Administrator reported that she had a discussion with Dan Hebert regarding the air conditioning upgrade at the house. The current system is not usable and it would be easier to install now rather than later as there is no sheetrock currently. The quoted cost was \$8,000. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the upgrade of the air conditioning system at a cost of \$8,000 and use CARES ACT funds. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- e. Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA): Ms. Fish noted that under the FFCRA, health care providers and emergency responders may be excluded from receiving these benefit changes. If an employee is not exempt and must quarantine, the employee would receive up to 80 hours of administrative leave.

Superintendent Champagne stated that both nursing home employees, Department of Correction employees and Sheriff's Department employees were all categorized as exempt. He continued that FFCRA states that an employee shall not incur loss of income due to testing. He suggested that the policy remain as is but reviewed on a case by case basis. It would allow a Department Head to decide if admin leave is needed. It would show good faith on the county's part that an employee does not need to use their own time to quarantine.

Commissioner Grenier stated the County should be flexible with DOC employees as long as there is no pushback on testing. Superintendent Champagne replied that all employees are testing. Ms. Beede indicated that several nursing home employees have had to use their time and this should be looked at retrospectively.

Commissioner Samson stated that in view of what the employees are going through, this needs to be done and go retro. Commissioner Grenier stated that he did not oppose the request but inquired about the cost. Ms. Fish replied that she would need to contact the payroll departments. The Director of Finance asked if this would be for all employees and Commissioner Grenier replied in the affirmative.

- f. Ms. Fish reported that she had been informed that some Delegation members were requesting that the public hearing scheduled for December 12 be held in person at the Lancaster Town Hall. Ms. Fish expressed that she was hesitant to attend the meeting due to the recent increase of positive COVID cases. Commissioner Brady stated that he was not comfortable with an in-person meeting. Commissioner Grenier stated that masks would be required with people 10 feet apart. The public cannot be excluded. Commissioner Samson stated that it would be dangerous to do so. Commissioner Grenier stated that ultimately it is the Delegation's call as it is their meeting. However, the Commissioners and employees will not attend. Superintendent Champagne noted that per policy county employees cannot attend in-person meetings.

Representative Troy Merner agreed with the safety concerns. He stated that he would inform the other members of the safety concerns.

#### UNINCORPORATED PLACES

- a. A planning board meeting has been tentatively scheduled for December 2, 2020

10. 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. The County Tax Warrants have been issued to Coös County towns/city and the county taxes are due on December 17.
- b. The Director of Finance is currently working with the State of NH, Department of Administrative Services in regards to renewing the Coös County lease agreement for the County Courthouse Complex, which will expire in May 2021. The county is looking at a three-year lease with 0% increase the first year and 1% increase in year 2 & year 3.
- c. On 10/30/20, the Governor's Office for Emergency Relief & Recovery (GOFERR) grant for September 1 through October 15 was prepared for the County office, ie County Administration, Finance, DOC, and Deeds. The remainder amount of the GOFERR grant in the amount of \$151,358.26 was submitted.
- d. As of November 10, 2020, the County has drawn \$5,500,000 from the Tax Anticipation Note line of credit. As of November 14, 2019, the County had drawn \$7,500,000.
- e. The County has been working with Steven McKinney, the Community Outreach & Resource Planning Specialist for the US Department of Labor. He has helped staff navigate thru the Department of Labor rules and keep the County in compliance with all the regulations, along with the labor attorneys. The payroll departments are now ready to implement the change in how overtime is calculated for county employees. BMSI has updated the software to implement the change when the county is ready. Attorneys Anna Cole and Mark Broth will attend the meeting to answer any questions or concerns.

At the meeting, the Director of Finance asked if the Board would take action. Commissioner Grenier asked for a source of funds for these repayments. The Director of Finance replied that there were funds available in various line items in the budget. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to move forward with the Paid Program with the Department of Labor to settle the overtime issue. Commissioner Grenier stated the department heads will need to be diligent with the overtime extra cost. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- f. On October 21, the software vendor Smartlinx, rolled out a new upgrade for the Time and Attendance and Scheduling program that the County uses. As with any new software, there are changes to adjust to. The Time and Attendance piece seems to be working ok, but the scheduler needs some work.
- g. In regards to the issue with Bangor Savings Bank and Passumpsic Bank not being in compliance with the NH State Statute, we were waiting for the Senate to take action on this bill. As of now, the bill has been “Laid on the Table” and will have to be refiled in the next session. In the meantime, staff continues to use both of these banks for County deposits. When the window is open again in the next legislative session, the Director of Finance is hopeful that the Delegation will try to bring this bill forward. The item will remain in her report until resolved.
- h. Since the last meeting, the Director of Finance has attended weekly meetings with the NHAC Administrator’s Affiliate and has attended the following virtual meetings/classes.
  - 10/14/20 Primex<sup>3</sup> Training – Emerging Leaders – Powerful Conversations
  - 10/27/20 NHAC County Conference
  - 10/28/20 Primex<sup>3</sup> Training - Creating & Maintaining Positive Workplace Culture
  - 10/29/20 North Country Council Annual Commission Meeting
  - 10/30/20 Recycling Budget Meeting
  - 11/6/20 NHAC Executive Committee Meeting

11. Report of the HR Coordinator Julie Brunault. A written report was not submitted to the Board. The HR Coordinator did not attend the meeting.

12. Commissioners’ Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

13. Other Business:

- a. Budget Transfers: The following budget transfer were presented to the Board for approval:

Coös County Nursing Home

To:	02-05600-3900 Admin Supplies & Expenses	370.00	
From:	02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		60.00
From:	02-05600-2300 Consultant Services		310.00
To:	02-05600-6800 Communications	6,530.00	
From:	02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		350.00
From:	02-05600-7000 Travel		860.00

From: 02-05600-1200 Health Insurance		5,320.00
To: 02-05640-1700 Education & Conferences	6,150.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		6,150.00
To: 02-05640-3100 Medical & Surgical Supplies	16,430.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		16,430.00
To: 02-05642-3800 Infection Control Expense	810.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		810.00
To: 02-05691-3900 Activities Supplies & Expenses	1,330.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		1,330.00
To: 02-05600-0300 Office Staff Salaries	14,000.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		12,790.00
From: 02-05600-1200 Health Insurance		1,210.00
To: 02-05640-0300 LPN Salaries	980.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		980.00
To: 02-05640-0400 Nursing Assistants' Salaries	123,900.00	
From: 02-05640-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		123,900.00
To: 02-05640-2300 Contract Nurses	380,000.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		5,700.00
From: 02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		374,300.00
To: 02-05660-0200 Laundry Aides' Salaries	3,990.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		3,990.00
To: 02-05670-0300 Housekeeping Aides' Salaries	17,360.00	
From: 02-06000-2000 Covid 19 Expenses		17,360.00
To: 02-05660-1200 Health Insurance	6,540.00	
From: 02-05660-6200 Gas for Dryers		6,540.00
To: 02-05680-2200 Physician Services	45,000.00	
From: 02-05680-2600 Mental Health Services/Residents		6,850.00
From: 02-05680-2500 Dentist Services		3,400.00
From: 02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		34,750.00
To: 02-05680-2400 Medical Director	2,830.00	
From: 02-05680-2500 Dentist Services		2,830.00

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the budget transfers as presented. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- b. Review and Approval of 2021 proposed budgets: The Director of Finance reported that the only change was the \$300 increase in the Register of Deeds budget. There were no questions on the proposed Unincorporated Budgets. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to accept the 2021 proposed budgets and to present the budgets to the Delegation and the municipalities. Commissioner Samson inquired about the proposed county tax. Commissioner Grenier replied that there was an estimated 7.50% increase in the county tax. The estimated surplus is not a definite amount at this time. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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- c. Berlin Nursing Home Snow Plow Bids: The Nursing Home Administrator opened the sealed bids. Bids were received from: Landscaping with Styles, Steve's Plowing & Home Care Services and Thomas Rozek. The NHA offered to email the bids to the Board for review. A special meeting will be held next week to award the bid.

d.Private Pay Rate: Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede provided information to the Board on private pay daily rates. She proposed an increase of \$25 per day for a daily private rate of \$325 per day. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to increase the private pay rate by \$25 per day for a daily private rate of \$325 per day effective January 1, 2021. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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14. Unincorporated Places: There was nothing to report.

15. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into nonpublic session RSA 91-A:3, II (c) at 10:56 a.m. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of nonpublic session at 11:12 a.m. No action was taken. The motion was approved by roll call 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier	Yes	Commissioner Samson	Yes	Commissioner Brady	Yes
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The December 16, 2020 Regular Meeting will be held remotely beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:14 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