

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH
September 10, 2014

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Sheriff Gerry Marcou; Chief Deputy Keith Roberge; County Treasurer Fred King; Delegation Chair Robert Th  berge; Register of Deeds Tanya Batchelder; Deputy Registrar Sally Pelletier; Bob DeAngelis, CEDC; Tom LoPizzo & Mike Davey, EEL; County Attorney John McCormick; Norman Brown, Selectman, Town Jefferson; Jay Phinzey, Patricia Knapp, Sherry White, DOE; Ray McPherson, USDA; Larry Barker, UNH/Cooperative Extension and members of the press and public.

Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:10 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 amend the agenda to strike item 13b. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the agenda as amended. All approved 3-0.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the August 20, 2014 meeting:

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to approve the minutes of the August 20, 2014 meeting. All approved 3-0.

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 August 2014 and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of September, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 3-0.

4. Correspondence:

- a. Jennifer reported that a letter was received from the Town of Lincoln notifying Co  s County of a public hearing to review the engineering plans for telecommunications facilities. The public hearing will be held at the Lincoln Town Hall on September 24 at 6 p.m.
- b. Letters from Louise Belanger and Laura Mills requesting the Board's signatures. The letters, addressing the Co  s County Delegation, requested that the Delegation urge the Governor to delay the implementation of Phase II of the Medicaid Managed Care for the nursing homes. Louise Belanger explained that at a joint meeting of the New Hampshire Health Care Association, the New Hampshire Association of Counties and the two MCO's was held in August. Several questions were asked of the MCO's, including who will calculate the per diem rates, as well as other issues critical to nursing homes and there were no answers. Laura Mills also added that all Medicaid recipients will be affected which is a majority of the residents at the nursing homes.

Delegation Chairman Robert Th  berge suggested that a copy of the letter be sent to the Governor. He will be meeting with her and will ask questions. He did not realize that the nursing homes could be removed from consideration.

Commissioner Grenier stated that this will affect all of the county taxpayers. Louise also noted that all of the counties will be presenting this letter to their Delegation.

County Treasurer Fred King asked if the level of care for the residents will need to change due to managed care. Louise replied that services are being restricted.

The Board requested that a letter be sent to the Governor and to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

5. Hearing of the Public:

- a. Tanya Batchelder, Co  s County Registry of Deeds Policy regarding access to public records. Ms. Batchelder explained that per RSA 478-14 the Registry of Deeds office is required to provide deeds to the town. All of the towns have a six-month window to get the updates for their town's transactions. They have a special account number to access these records, and they can print for free. This program will only allow them to access their own Town's documents. This gives them plenty of time for their Assessors to get the updates on a monthly basis so they can make changes to their tax records.

However, like the public, the towns can access the indexes back to 1979 and view the records from Book 730 forward, but cannot print them from the website. Should a copy be needed, the Registry charges \$1.00 per page.

Norman Brown, Selectman-Town of Jefferson, expressed his disagreement with the above practice. In his opinion the towns already support the Registry of Deeds through county taxes.

Sally Pelletier stated that each town was asked if they wanted to print their own records prior to the policy change. The intent was that each town print and keep copies of its records.

County Treasurer King asked how many towns have complained about the new process. Ms. Batchelder replied this was the first and only complaint. Commissioner Grenier noted that some towns are efficient and print their copies. He asked why these towns should subsidize other towns that are not.

Commission Samson asked what the policy was in other counties. Tanya replied that 6 out of the 10 have a six month window and one still uses paper copies.

- b. Bob DeAngelis, Co  s Economic Development Corporation: Mr. DeAngelis provided the Board with an report which indicated CEDC's activities and disbursements of county funds. *A copy of the report is on file.*

Commissioner Grenier noted that he was blown away by the current process in a good way. Chairman Th  berge also noted that he was pleased with the update.

- c. Tom LoPizzo, ENE/EEI Energy Advisor: Mr. LoPizzo along with Mike Davey, Senior Project Manager, spoke on reducing the operating and energy costs to the county facilities. The first step would consist of a no cost facility assessment and the County would be made aware of possible costs savings in report form. If the Board wished to continue further, the second step would be an investment grade audit which has a fee involved. The fee is waived if the project goes forward.

Commission Brady stated the audit should be considered for possible cost savings in future budgets. The savings could be significant and suggested moving forward with the audit. Commissioner Samson agreed it would be irresponsible not to move forward with the audit. Jennifer was asked to schedule the free audit with Mr. LoPizzo.

- d. Norman Brown made the Board aware of a new initiative that is in process for the veterans in the Pittsburg/Colebrook area. Currently, there is no transportation available for veterans who have medical appointments at the VA Hospital in White River Junction or at DHMC in Lebanon. Mr. Brown recently attended a meeting with a resource group in Colebrook. The 45th Parallel Emergency Services and the Veterans' Association have agreed to help with the initiative. The VA has two vans which are located in White River and can be used for transportation. The vans will be housed at the 45th. The VA will also supply fuel cards and funds for maintenance. Trained medical personnel will be on board for transports to these appointments. There is a need for drivers. He continued that anyone interested in becoming a driver may contact the 45th.

Mr. Brown added that he has researched pricing for the purchase of a new van. The estimated cost was \$14,000. He inquired about the process of requesting funds from the upcoming budget year. Commissioner Brady replied that outside special appropriations requests are due by September 25. Any outside agency requesting funds will need to make a brief presentation to the Board at the October 8 meeting. Commissioner Grenier asked if the County were to support the purchase of the van, would the County be held responsible in case of a tragedy. Mr. Brown replied that there would be no liability on the County's part. Commissioner Grenier also asked if a veteran in Gorham were in need of transportation would it be provided. Mr. Brown replied the 45th will be handling the scheduling.

- e. Chairman Robert Théberge noted that he had visited the Berlin Nursing Home and mentioned the replacement of the front entrance doors. Louise Belanger informed him that funds were not budgeted for the replacement of the doors. Chairman Théberge has spoken with members of the Delegation and at the next quarterly meeting the Delegation will vote to transfer the amount of \$6,080 from the Delegation's expense line item to the Berlin Nursing Home for the purchase and installation of the doors. Jennifer and the Board noted funds could be transferred from the facility fund. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to transfer \$6,080 from the facility fund subject to the County Delegation approval. All approved 3-0.

- 6. 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. Beginning January 1, 2015 under the shared responsibility provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, all employees with an average of 30 or more hours of service or 130 hours of service per month must be eligible for affordable health coverage with minimum value or the County may be subject to a penalty. The County will have to have a policy in place to monitor this and establish a standard measurement period, administrative period, and a stability period. Jennifer will be attending a workshop next week being put on by New Hampshire Interlocal Trust that hopefully will help clarify this upcoming provision. Jennifer hopes to have more information and recommendations to the Commissioners for the October meeting.

Commissioner Grenier asked what the cost of the penalty would be. Jennifer did not know but would inquire at the workshop.

- b. The North Country Council will be holding several Open Houses around the North Country to hear feedback on its comprehensive plan for New Hampshire's North Country. There will be two sessions held in Coös County. On September 16, there will be a session at the Stratford Town Hall and on September 18, a session at the Gorham Town Hall. Both sessions will be held from 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm. The draft comprehensive plan can be found on the council's website, www.ncouncil.org. The public is invited and encouraged to attend.

UNINCORPORATED PLACES

- a. The Operations Supervisor, Patrick Konvicka, of Wildcat Mountain has requested an extension to its liquor license for events planned at the ski lodge every Saturday from April 4 - May 2, 2015. Wildcat will be hosting outdoor concerts from 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm weather permitting. Wildcat would like to sell beer and wine during these concerts. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve Wildcat Mountain's request for a liquor license extension. All approved 3-0. Jennifer presented a letter for the Board's signature.
- b. Jennifer has been the Commissioners' designee on the 45th Parallel EMS board representing the unincorporated place, Dixville since 2011. The 3-year term will end in October. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to appoint Jennifer Fish, County Administrator, as the Commissioners' designee on the 45th Parallel EMS Board for a three year term. All approved 3-0.

7. Report of the Superintendent of Corrections Craig Hamelin. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

TOTAL IN FACILITY	49
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	26
PRETRIAL	23
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	1
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	2
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	0
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0

HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES	20
HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	CARROLL DOC: 1 PT MALE GRAFTON DOC: 1 PT MALE, 4 HOC FEMALE, 9 PT FEMALE MERRIMACK DOC: 1 PT MALE SULLIVAN DOC: 1 HOC MALE NHSP: 1 HOC MALE, 1 PT MALE, 1 HOC FEMALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION AUGUST	46
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY AUGUST	1425
FEMALE DAYS SERVED AUGUST	365 (19 females)
TOTAL INMATES BOOKED AUGUST	37
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED AUGUST	28

- a. Female inmate days served at Grafton County Department of Corrections has increased again in August. This seems to be in correlation with the increase in the average male population, which has risen steadily over the past few months.
- b. The flooring project has been completed in the Administrative areas. The corrections entrance, Control Center, Processing Room, Medical Room and Administrative Hallway have new flooring and cove base installed. Inmates and staff have been busy getting furniture and equipment back into place, and getting the floors polished to a high shine.
- c. Craig attended the Corrections PREA Symposium on September 8 and 9, which was held at Primex³. This training on the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003 is sponsored by Primex³ and Merrimack County Department of Corrections. The workshop agenda was designed to give an overview of how PREA came about, how it applies to local jails, compliance/non-compliance issues and the review of the actual PREA standards.
- d. At the meeting, Superintendent Hamelin spoke of the increase of psychological issues. A discussion ensued on issues with bed space at the State Hospital and of wait times. Sheriff Marcou stated that recently an individual was accepted and transported by the Sheriff's Department from the jail to the State Hospital. After four days, the sheriff's department was called to come back and get him due to what the State Hospital claimed was an error in the paperwork. The individual was brought back to the jail; Superintendent Hamelin was then required to start the petition process over to get the individual a bed; and he was transported down again days later. Chairman Th  berge stated he would look into the matter and would contact Senator Woodburn.

Commissioner Grenier stated that endangering the life of the individual is unacceptable.

8. 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 74. The occupancy for the month of August was 83%. In August, there were two (2) admissions, two (2) deaths and one (1) discharge. There have been no admissions in September but one was planned for September 10. Of the 75 residents, ten (10) are Private Pay and eight (8) residents are Vermont Medicaid. The totals for 2014: Nineteen (19) admissions, five (5) discharges and thirteen (13) deaths.
- b. NH Medicaid: The Nursing Home Administrators from the NH county homes have many concerns over the Medicaid MCOs and how the changes will affect the homes. The Nursing

Home Administrators, as a group, decided to approach the Boards of Commissioners and request that they approach the County Delegations with a request to urge the governor to delay the implementation of Phase II until all of the questions and concerns can be addressed.

- c. Lancaster Fair: The Nursing Hospital residents were again pleased to receive many ribbons for their entries at Lancaster Fair.

- d. Nursing Hours at the DOC:

2013	MINUTES	Hours	2014	Minutes	Hours
January	267	4	January	22	<0.5
February	534	9	February	37	<1
March	632	11	March	31	0.5
April	846	14	April		0
May	670	11	May	175	3
June	361	6	June	70	1.2
July	383	6	July	22	<.5
August	388	6	August	219	3.5

- 9. Report of the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

- a. Census: The current census was 95. Fifteen (15) residents were Private Pay and five (5) residents were Medicaid pending. The average daily census for August was 94.16; there were five (5) admissions in August and two (2) deaths.

Year to Date: Admissions 27, deaths 20 and 1 discharge home. (Total deaths in 2013 was 27 and admissions 22)

- b. New Entrance Canopy/Parking Lot Update: A meeting was held on September 4 with Jay Poulin & David Larin from HEB and Curt Burke & Tom Burke, Jr., contractors for the project to discuss the recent concerns regarding the columns. At this time all issues with the columns have been rectified.
- c. NH Medicaid: As stated in Laura Mills' report, there are many concerns surrounding the implementation of Phase II. Louise also forwarded a similar letter to Jennifer Fish to place in the Commissioners Correspondence folder, along with a letter that the Commissioners can sign and forward to the Delegation.
- d. Time Warner Cable: The exterior underground cable has been installed; no issues were noted during the conversion.
- e. Power Outage: Back in February, Louise reported to the Commissioners on a break in the underground wires connecting the home with PSNH power grid. A phase failure relay switch burnt as a result of the cable break. **Update:** Roger Smith an electrician from Concord visited the nursing home on August 28. No recommendations from Mr. Smith or Primex³ have been received at this time.

- f. Meet the Governor: On August 28, the residents were invited to meet Governor Maggie Hassan at the gazebo on Pleasant Street. Four residents responded to the invitation (it was a cold evening which led to a decrease in the number of residents). The residents enjoyed speaking with Governor Maggie Hassan, Senator Jeff Woodburn and several Delegation Members.
 - g. At the meeting, Louise reported that a request for an agency nurse may be forthcoming for the 11-7 shift.
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 2013 Financial Statements have been completed and bound copies for the Commissioners were provided at the meeting.
 - b. To date, \$3,000,000 has been transferred from the Tax Anticipation Note.

11. Other Business:

- a. County Farm and Land Advisory Committee Proposal: Commissioner Samson presented the following list of individuals for consideration:
 - Sally Gaynor-Knecht: Farm Family Insurance agent 20+ years, Farm Bureau, Coos County-Advisory Council and beef farmer 42+ years.
 - Brendon Prusick, Coös County Extension Forester.
 - Rick Samson, Coös County Commissioner District Three representing the commissioners.
 - Matthew Smith, Former manager and part owner of Peaslee's Potatoes and Beef Farm Guildhall VT. Owner of the Smith Beef Farm Lost Nation Lancaster NH, 27+ years.
 - Richard Thibeault, owner and operator of the Thibeault Farm Hall Stream 35+ years.
 - There are still 2 seats open on the committee.

Commissioner Samson requested that Commissioner Brady and Commissioner Grenier submit an individual from their district to be a representative on the committee. Commissioner Samson added that he would like to hold a meeting soon in order to discuss the land lease which expires at the end of the year.

- b. USDA Healthy Kids Initiative: Chairman Robert Théberge, Jay Phinzey, Patricia Knapp, Sherry White, DOE; Ray McPherson, USDA; Larry Barker & Heidi Barker, UNH Cooperative Extension.

Chairman Théberge spoke of a pilot program which would consist of children visiting and interacting with the elderly at the nursing homes one or two days per week. He also stated that he had spoken with the nursing home administrators and the kitchens cannot be used as the facilities are certified.

Ms. White explained that a typical day would consist of:

- parents would drop off at nursing home for a specific period of time;
- an educational component/craft;
- physical activity (playing on playground)
- lunch
- parents would pick up at the nursing home.

Chairman Th  berge asked the following questions:

- Who would supervise the children? Ms. White replied that sponsors (individuals) will watch the children.
- Since the kitchens cannot be used where would the food be prepared? Ms. White replied that someone from the outside would prepare the food. The NH Food Bank is always looking for growth.
- Any cost to the County? Mr. Phinzey replied that he did not have an answer at this time. The cost could be minimal, if any.

Commission Grenier stated that it is a worthwhile project but not in nursing homes and jail settings. He expressed that the residents are top priority and must be protected from unnecessary sickness. He would not support the program. His objection is solely location based.

Commissioner Brady stated that both nursing homes have 5-star ratings. The initiative is a worthwhile program but the residents are vulnerable. The nursing homes are the residents' homes. He noted the following questions:

- What is the residents' quality of life if the children are at the facility?
- What is the likelihood of children without sickness?

He was not prepared to support the program in a nursing home setting.

Fred King noted that at the beginning of the meeting issues with the Managed Care System were discussed. Those issues need to be worked out first, before new endeavors are taken on.

Commissioner Samson asked if the Stewartstown School had been approached. Ms. White replied that the Superintendent of the District would not open the school during the summer.

Laura Mills added that children visit during the school year. After spending a couple of hours with the children, both residents and children are ready to leave.

Chairman Th  berge and Mr. Phinzey thanked the Board. They will continue to look for possibilities for rural children.

12. Unincorporated Places:

- a. *Approval of the MS-1:* The Board signed the MS-1 certification sheets for all of the Unincorporated Places provided by Linda Harris.

13. Any other public input:

Commissioner Samson reported that he had toured the Brookfield wind park. A request to widen the road to 16 feet and leave it that way has been presented. He recommended the request.

The next regular monthly meeting will be held Wednesday October 8, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. at the Co  s County Nursing Home in Berlin, NH.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:55 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk