

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Coös County Courthouse - Lancaster, NH
May 7, 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; County Attorney John McCormick; Sonny Martin; Patti Stolte; Dave Enos; members of the press and public.

Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:03 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Approval of the Agenda:

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

2. Approval of the Minutes of the April 9, 2014 meeting:

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the April 9, 2014 meeting. All approved 3-0.

3. Approval of Payrolls and Disbursements:

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to approve the Payrolls and Disbursements for the month of April 2014 and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of May, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 3-0.

4. Correspondence:

County Administrator Jennifer Fish reported that an email was received from Dennis Thompson, who is repairing the riverbank on Chapel Hill Road in Wentworth Location. Mr. Thompson informed the Board that due to the heavy rain the river is currently too high to do any work. The project will continue once the river recedes.

5. Hearing of the Public:

- a. Sonny Martin, Martin's Agway in Lancaster, asked the Board to send a letter to the NH Fish & Game asking that the existing hunting regulations stay the same. The NH Fish & Game has submitted changes which would bring back the traditional way of hunting that does not allow attractants/baiting. Commissioner Grenier stated that he attended the Androscoggin Fish & Game Banquet in Berlin recently and the Fish & Game Club has taken the same position. There is no need for increased regulations as the deer herd is stable and healthy. Commissioner Samson and Commissioner Brady stated that several constituents have asked for the Board's support. Mr. Martin stated that the new regulations will adversely affect the North Country. Fred King suggested that the Board obtain the statistical data used by Fish and Game. Commissioner Brady also added that the new regulations will also affect the elderly population who enjoy hunting but cannot do a lot of walking. A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to send a letter to Fish and Game requesting the statistical data to back up the proposed regulations. A follow-up letter with the Board's noted

opposition to the new rules and regulations will also be sent upon receipt and review of the data. All approved 3-0.

- b. Patti Stolte, North Country Elderly Programs, provided the Board with copies of the Tri-County CAP audited financials.

Ms. Stolte reported that the Berlin Adult Day Care was closed at the end of the year. She apologized again for the misstep of not informing the Board of the closure of the Whitefield Adult Day Care in 2013. Commissioner Brady stated that his biggest issue was that the funds were approved by the Delegation in March and the funds were requested and disbursed in April/May and the Board was not made aware of the closure. The Adult Day Care Program was strongly advocated for by the Coös County Commissioners, Representative Herb Richardson and former HHS Commissioner Stevens with some assistance of the Morrison Nursing Home.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the private/state/county partnership was unique but the State did not hold its part of the bargain. He added that Ms. Stolte was not being blamed for the closures of the Adult Day Care Centers. Mr. King stated that it is another example of the cost shifting to the county taxpayers.

Commissioner Brady asked for a list of the current Board of Directors. Ms. Stolte asked that a copy of the audited financials be provided to the County Delegation.

- 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. Jennifer received requests from the Town of Gorham and the Town of Lancaster for financial support in their legal fight over utility tax valuations in their respective towns.

Commissioner Brady noted that several towns were unaware of the availability the funds. A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier that a letter is sent to all of the towns in the County informing them of the availability of the Utility Value Defense Fund. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to appropriate from the Utility Valuation Defense Fund to the Town of Gorham \$10,000 and to the Town of Lancaster \$15,000.

Commissioner Brady stated that through an email Representative Th  berge indicated that if the current appropriated funds are not sufficient, the Delegation may discuss further funding. Commissioner Grenier noted that utility issues are county wide. Mr. King asked why the County was not suing on behalf of all the towns. Commissioner Grenier replied that the DRA is going through BTLA by community and the communities cannot unite as one. So a class action lawsuit is not an option.

The Senate Ways and Means Committee passed HB1590 on Tuesday by a vote of 4-1. HB1590 sets the valuation of the Granite Reliable Wind Farm in Dixville and Millsfield at \$113 million. The motion was approved 3-0.

- b. Jennifer received the County's final health insurance July 1 renewal rates from NH Interlocal Trust. If the County were to remain with its current plan the premium increase will be 16.03%. Jennifer recommended a change to the prescription plan from a 3-tier to a 4-tier which would save three percent on the increase. She looked at other plans which included deductible changes but suggested only prescription changes this year.

Commissioner Grenier asked if a presentation on the proposed changes will be made to the employees and Jennifer replied in the affirmative. Jennifer noted that the proposed changes still need to be presented to the unions for their approval.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to accept the prescription plan recommendations made by the County Administrator. All approved 3-0.

- c. The County's current waiting period for health insurance benefits coincides with the County's probationary period. This policy will not be in compliance as of July 1, 2014 with the Affordable Care Act. According to the Affordable Care Act, the maximum waiting period cannot exceed 90 days. Jennifer recommended that the waiting period for health insurance be changed from 480 hours of service or 6 months to the first day of the month following 60 days of employment.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to change the waiting period for health insurance to the first day of the month following 60 days of employment. All approved 3-0.

- d. The CDBG grant application for the Bartlett School project in Berlin has been approved. Jennifer placed an ad in the Union Leader requesting proposals for a Grant Administrator. Requests were also directly submitted to known CDBG administrators provided by the NH CDFA.
- e. The Primex³ Annual Conference will be held May 21-22, 2014 at the Mountain View Grand Hotel in Whitefield.

UNINCORPORATED PLACES

- a. The Coös County Economic Impact Study prepared by HDR has been completed. Jennifer presented copies to Commissioners and noted that an electronic version will be posted on the website.

Commissioner Brady asked that a copy of the study be sent to each town office in the County along with its availability on the County's website.

- b. The NH Department of Education informed the County that the National Forest Reserve funds have been received. The total amount received was \$114,210.75 which was \$9,454.73 less than last year. The National Forest Reserve funds are used to pay student tuition for those children that reside in the Unincorporated Places.

Currently four students from Millsfield attend Colebrook Schools and one student from Millsfield attends Errol School. Part of the NFR funds, \$78,221.72, will be used to pay the tuition for those students. The remaining \$35,989.03 will be equally distributed to the school districts throughout Coös County. A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by

Commissioner Grenier to approve the allocation and to recommend it to the Delegation for approval. All approved 3-0.

- c. Jennifer presented the contract from the North Country Council for their assistance with updating the Land Use Regulations and Site Plan Regulations for the Unincorporated Places. As discussed at the April meeting, the proposed cost was \$1,700 for the Land Subdivision Regulations and \$1,700 for the Site Plan Review. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the North Country Council contract at a proposed cost of \$1,700 for the Land Subdivision Regulations and \$1,700 for the Site Plan Review. All approved 3-0.
- d. Patrick Konvicka, Operations Supervisor for Wildcat Mountain requested the Commissioners' permission to apply for a liquor license extension for two events happening at Wildcat Mountain this summer. The first event will be a running race to be held on June 29 to benefit the Wildcat Race Team. A live band and refreshments will be at the end of the race. The second event will be a concert on August 30 to celebrate the end of the summer. This event will also feature a live band and refreshments from 2-5 pm. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the request for a liquor license extension for Wildcat Mountain. 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	34
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	19
PRETRIAL	15
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	1
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	2
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	2 (1 FEMALE - GRAFTON PROGRAM)
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0
HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES	9
HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	GRAFTON DOC: 1 PT MALE, 2 HOC FEMALE, 1 PT FEMALE ROCKINGHAM DOC: 1 HOC MALE NHSP: 1 HOC MALE, 2 PT MALE STRAFFORD DOC: 1 HOC MALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION APRIL	37
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY APRIL	1108
FEMALE DAYS SERVED APRIL	75 (10 females)
TOTAL INMATES ADMITTED APRIL	29
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED APRIL	28

- a. Following a very successful demonstration and trial period with another offender monitoring service, OmniLink, the Department of Corrections has started using their highly advanced equipment and software to monitor offenders who are on release programs. OmniLink, whose GPS devices can also utilize Verizon cell towers (CDMA technology), appears to provide a much better performance over other monitoring companies, which have traditionally used only GSM technology. In addition to better equipment and monitoring technology, OmniLink has offered pricing which will make release programs much more affordable for eligible offenders.

- b. A positive change to staff training and development is taking place. All staff training will be managed through Relias Learning which will allow the training coordinator to manage online and in-house training programs, policies, certificates and reports. In addition to providing the instructors with a complete training management database, the instructors may assign courses and curriculum plans electronically from a library with hundreds of hours of accredited corrections, healthcare, and supervisory training courses. Each staff member will also be assigned an individual training account which provides personal course management and gives access to the expansive library of continuing education courses.

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 77. The occupancy for the month of April was 84.6%. In April, there was one (1) admission (a respite) and two (2) deaths. Of the 77 residents, twelve (12) are Private Pay and nine (9) residents are Vermont Medicaid. Two residents have been denied Medicaid and the family continues to work on the appeal. There was a respite admission on May 1. Two (2) admissions are currently being worked on, of which one includes a respite. The totals for 2014: *Ten (10) admissions, no (0) discharges and seven (7) deaths.*
- b. Staffing: The 32 hour 11-7 nursing position (RN/LPN) has been filled. The 16 hour 3-11 position remains open, but inquiries have been made.
- c. Large Dryer: The large dryer scheduled for replacement in 2014 has been replaced.
- d. LNA Class: The Nursing Hospital will be holding a LNA class from the end of May through July.
- e. Coös County Farm Water System: On April 23, Commissioner Samson arranged a meeting with Lenny Martel, one of the former Plant Managers, to discuss the water system.

On April 29, another meeting was held with officials from the towns of Stewartstown and Canaan (VT), members of the public, Commissioner Samson and Gary Leach, a water systems engineer for the town of Canaan, VT at the Stewartstown town hall. It was learned that Stewartstown is not interested in the County's water system but is interested in the County complex hooking on to the town's water system to share the cost of the upgrades to the town's system. Plant Manager, Ron Crawford; Water Systems Operator, Dennis Bouvier, and Laura attended both meetings.

f. 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

- g. Laura had an issue for non-public, Section 91-A:3 II (a) and (c).

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 89. Thirteen (13) residents were Private Pay and three (3) residents were Medicaid pending. The average daily census for April was 87.1; there were 4 admissions in April and 3 deaths. The year to date statistics: admissions 12, deaths 13. (The total deaths in 2013 were 27 and admissions 22.)
- b. Nursing Department: The Nursing Home will be hosting an MNA class (Medication Nursing Assistant) provided by Clinical Career Training. All 4 students are currently LNAs at the Nursing Home. The classes are scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 pm-10 pm, beginning in April and ending in June.
- c. Environmental Services:
 - One of the dryers needed repairs to the basket at a cost of \$1,500. Repairs of this nature are anticipated on a dryer of 15 years of age.
 - Louise previously reported that the facility had purchased an indirect water heater tank to replace a leaking tank that was 10 years old. Now there is a leak in the other 10 year old tank and it needs to be replaced. The replacement of one tank was budgeted in 2014. In order to replace the current leaking tank, the money that was budgeted for a mixing valve will be used.
- d. New Entrance Canopy/Parking Lot Update: A meeting was held at the Nursing Home on Friday April 18 with Jay Poulin from HEB; David Laurin, Architect; Gary Fysh, PSNH District Manager; and Tom Burke of Gordon T. Burke & Sons, Inc. Construction will begin once the ground has thawed and road weight limits are removed. Commissioner Brady signed the Execution of Agreement and Notice to Proceed. PSNH will upgrade underground service to the facility during construction. Time Warner has also voiced an interest in upgrading service to the facility during construction. A call was made to Fairpoint regarding upgrades and at this time they do not want to upgrade. Mike Holt, Environmental Services Manager will take advantage during construction to run 2 inch conduit from the road to the facility; both ends of the conduit will be capped. This conduit will be available in the future should the Nursing Home have an issue with the fire alarm cable and/or phone cable. The estimated cost was \$350.

The Commissioners suggested that a second conduit be installed.

Louise reported that there may be a delay in the project because of the sprinkler system. The Berlin Fire Department had stated that sprinkler heads were not required in the outside canopy. The State Surveyor finally responded last week that sprinklers will be required. Currently, HEB is involved and working on clarification.

- e. Time Warner Cable toured the nursing home on April 22. The current cables and connections were examined within the home. Pat Speikers, Construction Project Coordinator for Time Warner Cable expressed that it was time to upgrade interior cables prior to upgrading the exterior cables during the front entrance construction. The interior project will involve running new cable throughout the home, the project started on April 23.
- f. Louise requested the Board's authorization to allow the Dietary Manager to travel to the State of Maine for a Food Service Show. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the request. All approved 3-0.

Commissioner Grenier inquired if adjustments have been made at the Nursing Home due to the low census. Louise replied that the agency nurse is no longer at the facility. Staff is being encouraged to use personal leave time and no replacements hours are being used. Louise noted that several inquiries have been made about the Nursing Home due to the closing of the Adult Day Care.

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 Auditors were at the Nursing Hospital on May 2 to audit internal controls and to finalize the 2013 Audit.
- b. The loan at Passumpsic Bank for the West Stewartstown Nursing Home Addition has been paid in full.
- c. Funds have not been drawn from the Tax Anticipation Note as of yet, but will most likely have to in the first half of May.
- d. Carrie provided bid information from the County's current electricity broker, Usource, LLC to review. Mr. McGinnis of Usource suggested that the County begin the bid process now, even though the current contract does not end until September. Mr. McGinnis noted to Carrie that based on the past winter and the lack of natural gas pipelines coming to New England the expectations are prices will not be coming down until both generation and pipelines are built in Northern New England. There have been announcements on retiring some of the current generations including Vermont Yankee, Brayton and Salem Harbor which means elevated prices moving forward. The market has moved up over the last year, but Usource expects to see higher and higher prices through this year going into 2018.

Upon review of the list, Commissioner Grenier asked that E&H, who is a major player in Berlin, be contacted as well. He also asked for the PSNH default rate. The Board tabled further discussion until the June meeting.

11. Other Business:

- a. Budget Transfers: Louise presented line item budget transfers for the Berlin Nursing Home.

To:	Contract Nurse	+\$8,800	
From:	RN Salaries		-\$8,800
To:	New Equipment (replacement of two ice machines)	+\$6,500	
From:	Health Insurance		-\$6,500

The Board approved and signed the line item budget transfers.

- b. Status of the County Farm Land and Barn Leases: Jennifer reported that the leases with David Santamaria were terminated in April. The Delegation Subcommittee may make its recommendations at the May 12 meeting. Jennifer has been working with Commissioner Samson on an application for the lease of the farm lands. However, the continuation of the application process will be dependent on the Delegation's recommendations.

Commissioner Samson reported that Rachelle Lyons, Plymouth State University, will visit the County Farm Lands on Friday, May 9. Steve Turaj, Coös County /UNH Cooperative Extension, will be testing the soil on May 15.

Commissioner Samson met with a local contractor, Phil Caron, in regards to repairing the culverts by the railroad bed. He asked for authorization to hire Mr. Caron to proceed with the repairs. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve Phil Caron to repair the culverts on the County land and other associated work not to exceed \$1,000. All approved 3-0.

County Treasurer King asked if the Board had taken a position on the barn. In his opinion, the buildings must go. Commissioner Brady stated that the Board was awaiting the Delegation's recommendations.

12. Unincorporated Places:

- a. Timber Warrants: The Board approved and signed three timber warrants.
- b. Millsfield Property Tax Abatements: Jennifer requested Board action based on the information provided by Mark Nieder of Commerford, Nieder & Perkins on March 19. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to deny the seven remaining property tax abatement applications based on the assessors recommendation. All approved 3-0.

13. Any other public input:

- a. Dave Enos, Pittsburg informed the Board that the 13 Mile Wood Economic Report was available for review. He stated that it was a good, informative report. Mr. Enos stated he would email the link to the Board.

Mr. Enos also asked that the Board seriously consider adding a Zoning Board in light of the future projects in the Unincorporated Places. Jennifer will speak with John Scarinza, Planning Board Chair, on the status of the ZBA as it has been discussed in the past. Commissioner Grenier added that the ZBA needs to be Planning Board driven.

Mr. Enos added that in his opinion the barn's current condition is due to lack of care.

- b. County Attorney John McCormick reported that Jen Chardon was hired for the position previously approved by the Board.

14. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(a) & (c) at 11:30 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of non-public session at 11:53 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the donation of personal time from employees at the Nursing Hospital to an employee based on a critical medical emergency. All approved 3-0.

The next regular monthly meeting will be held Wednesday, June 11, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Home in Berlin, NH.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11.53 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk