

Coös County Commissioners  
Regular Meeting  
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH  
January 15, 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; members of the press and public.

Commissioner Brady opened the public hearing at 9:02 a.m. "to declare a class VI road an emergency lane", Chapel Hill Road, Wentworth Location. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson that the purpose of the hearing to declare the class VI road an emergency lane was an inaccurate designation. The wording on the public notice should have read "private way to be declared an emergency lane" per RSA 231:59. All approved 3-0.

Commissioner Brady opened the public hearing at 9:04 a.m. "to declare a class VI private way to be declared an emergency lane" per RSA 231:59.

County Administrator Jennifer Fish reported that the purpose of the public hearing was to declare the private way an emergency lane per RSA 231:59. Notices were mailed to all persons known to have legal interest in the way, 10 days prior to the hearing. Jennifer noted that the RSA states that the emergency lane shall not be declared if permission is denied by any person with a legal right to deny such permission.

Edith Tucker, *The Coös County Democrat*, asked how the road became to be considered a private way. In previous meetings, the road has been discussed as a public road. Jennifer took responsibility in that she made an error in preparing the public notice. The notice should have stated private way and not road. Commissioner Samson stated that that Chapel Hill Road has never been considered a Class VI road it has always been referred to as a private road. The one question was who owned the road. Commissioner Grenier concurred with Commissioner Samson. County Treasurer King added that Brown Company owned the road years ago to grant access to camp owners.

Ray Cyr, Chapel Hill Road property owner, provided a brief history on the issue which started 2011.

Dave Enos, Pittsburg, stated that he has attended most of Commissioners' meetings and Chapel Hill was always referred to as a private road not a public road.

Bob Senter, Wentworth Location resident, sympathetic to the property owners along Chapel Hill; however, he asked why public funds should be used to repair or rebuild a private road. The road has never been maintained by the town. The USFWS should be paying for the repairs. The bulk of the taxpayer money comes from the few property owners that are left in Wentworth Location. Revenues keep decreasing as the USFWS picks up more properties and taxes keep increasing.

Ed DeBlois, Chapel Hill Road property owner, stated that if the road continues to erode there will be no access to the camps. The people who own property on Chapel Hill also pay property taxes. The proposal is a simple fix; it will provide safe access to the camps and is cost effective.

Mr. Cyr clarified that the road is not being repaired. The riverbank will be repaired to prevent further erosion.

Jennifer stated that payment for the project will be financed through a bank note and spread out over a 10 year period. The Federal PILT payment received from the federal government each year will be used for the payment.

County Treasurer King stated that the federal government should provide funds towards the project. Commissioner Samson read RSA 231:59-a II. He added that the repairs to the riverbank will benefit not only Chapel Hill Road but all Wentworth Location residents. The Commissioners intend to ask the federal government for funds toward the project.

Mrs. Kathleen Bertin stated that she resides on Chapel Hill Road full time and the riverbank needs to be repaired.

Ray Savage, resident of Wentworth Location, stated that he lives on Route 16 below Chapel Hill and did not believe that his taxpayer dollar should be used to repair the road.

Mr. Senter stated that he was not opposed to the repairs but felt that the federal government should step up. He also added that it was not Paul Casey's fault and his hands are tied when it comes to expenditures. Mr. Senter asked if the PILT funds that will be used to pay for the note is currently used for Wentworth Location. Jennifer replied yes. Mr. Senter noted that Wentworth Location will lose the PILT payment used to offset the property taxes for the purpose of the bank note. He added that Route 16 is also in need of repairs and the State will need to spend funds to repair it. He was ok with the repairs as long as the funds can be recouped in the long run. Mr. Senter also asked if this action will open other unincorporated places to request funds to get areas fixed.

Dennis Thompson, NNEFS, stated he had engineering and survey plans drawn to provide to the State. He offered to show the plans to the Wentworth Location residents after the meeting.

Alan McLain appreciated all the work that has been done.

Commissioner Samson stated that the Commissioners could not make any promises about getting money from the federal government; however, the Board will do everything possible to get the money back.

Commissioner Brady closed the public hearing at 9:35 a.m.

Commissioner Brady opened the meeting at 9:43 a.m.

1. Approval of the agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to amend the order of the agenda and move item 11b. Chapel Hill Road, Wentworth Location - Emergency Lane to item 1a. All approved 3-0.

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

- a. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to declare Chapel Hill Road as an emergency lane per RSA 231:59all. All approved 3-0.

County Treasurer King asked that it be noted that the representatives for Congresswoman Kuster left during the public hearing and the Revenue Sharing Budget presented to Congress was zero.

Paul Casey, USFWS, presented Special Use Permits which required the Commissioners' signatures.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the December 4 & December 18, 2013 and January 8, 2014 meetings:  
A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the December 4, 2013, December 18, 2013 and January 8, 2014 meetings.  
Commissioner Samson noted that Sheriff Marcou did not attend the December 4 meeting but had attended the December 18 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 December 2013 and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of January, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 3-0.
4. Hearing of the Public:
  - a. Dave Enos, Pittsburg, stated that the newly designed website was significantly better. He asked if the Board would consider adding "communications" to the agenda.
  - b. Shawn Donahue, Stark, reported that due to the State's funding, a teacher's position will be cut at the school. He asked if the State's funding has reduced on the County's side. Commissioner Brady stated that the State has been and continues to down shift costs to the counties. He suggested that Mr. Donahue speak to the County Delegation.
  - c. Fred King updated the Board on the Land Use Study. The study is taking longer than he anticipated. HDR inquired if there were any other people that should be interviewed. Mr. King asked that the Commissioners each come up with two names of individuals who could be interviewed. He would like to get the project wrapped up.
5. Report of the County Administrator Jennifer Fish. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:
  - a. The new County website went live on December 30. Jennifer encouraged everyone to check out the site. New items are being added all the time.
  - b. The second installment for the Decommissioning fund was received on December 31 in the amount of \$84,403.30. The total Decommissioning fund balance is \$168,821.60.
  - c. Jennifer received a request from the Colebrook Downtown Development Association (CDDA) to amend certain items that were listed in their Economic Development Pilot Project application that was approved in 2012. The \$5,000 was granted to the Town of Colebrook to be used by the CDDA. The amendments were as follows:

- ✓ Signs placed at the entrances to the town of \$1,200 remains as planned.
- ✓ Signage along planned ATV trails of \$1,250 amended to \$1,000.
- ✓ 18 pole banners for Main Street to be amended to Christmas lights erected on poles along Main Street costing in total \$6,519.26 (of which \$3,300 came from two Tillotson North Country Grants (spent).
- ✓ 5,000 brochures detailing Colebrook's facilities be amended from \$1,075 to \$2,456.60 (increasing size from letter size to 16" x 18" and including a detailed map showing every business in Colebrook town center). (bill received)
- ✓ Advertising in Coös County publications and local radio of \$1,600 remains as planned (\$1,178.03 spent)

Jennifer stated that action was needed to approve the above amendments as presented. If the amendments are approved the Town of Colebrook will release the grant funds to the CDDA.

A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to approve the changes recommended by Jennifer Fish, County Administrator. All approved 3-0.

- d. The Legislature is back in session. The NH Association of Counties has prepared a list of priority bills for the 2014 Session that affect counties. A complete list can be found on the association's website, <http://www.nhcounties.org/resources.html>. There are bills relative to labor and collective bargaining, county budget issues, and county government officials and others relating to the right to know law and NH Retirement System. There is also one to repeal the timber tax.
  - e. Hearings on **HB 1435-L** relative to the authority of municipalities to enter in agreements for payments in lieu of taxes and **HB 1590-L** relative to payments in lieu of taxes for renewable generation facilities in unincorporated places are scheduled for Tuesday, January 14. Members of the Science, Technology and Energy Committee will be hearing both bills. HB 1435-L is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. in LOB Room 304 and HB 1590-L will be heard at 11:00 a.m.
  - f. At the meeting, Jennifer reported that she had been contacted by the North Country Council inquiring who the Coös County representative was on the North Country Council Board. Mr. King replied that he was the representative but did not attend the meetings and asked to be replaced. Mr. King seemed to think that the appointment came as a result from his seat on the Unincorporated Places Planning Board. Jennifer stated that she would contact John Scarinza and report to the Commissioners at the February meeting.
6. 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:

<b>TOTAL IN FACILITY</b>	<b>41</b>
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	25
PRETRIAL	16
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	2
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	1
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	0
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0

HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES	13
HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	GRAFTON DOC: 2 HOC FEMALE, 4 PT FEMALE
PT= PRETRIAL	HILLSBOROUGH DOC:1 HOC FEMALE
	NHSP: 4 PT MALE, 1 HOC MALE, 1 HOC FEMALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION DECEMBER	41
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY DECEMBER	1,268
FEMALE DAYS SERVED DECEMBER	208 (12 females)
TOTAL INMATES ADMITTED DECEMBER	22
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED DECEMBER	22

- a. Sergeant Mark Dillon retired on December 25 after serving the past 16 years with the Department and having a total of 24 years of corrections service in New Hampshire. A plaque was presented to Sergeant Dillon on behalf of the Department of Corrections on December 17. Superintendent Hamelin thanked him for the many years of dedicated service and wished him the best in his well-deserved retirement.
- b. Congratulations to Ben Champagne who was promoted from Corporal to Sergeant on December 18. He assumed the duties of 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift Sergeant on December 26, which was vacated upon Sergeant Dillon's retirement. Sergeant Champagne has been with the Department since 2007 and had been assigned as 1<sup>st</sup> Shift Corporal.
- c. Congratulations to Brian Cross who was promoted from Officer to Corporal on December 31. He assumed the duties of 1<sup>st</sup> Shift Corporal, previously assigned to Sergeant Champagne. Corporal Cross has been with the Department since 2007 and was assigned to 1<sup>st</sup> Shift for the majority of that time.
- d. Officer Garrett Rella was selected to transfer from 3rd Shift to 2nd Shift. Anthony Havalotti, of Stewartstown NH, has been hired to fill the vacant 3rd Shift position. He began the 8-week Field Training Program on December 16.
- e. Officer Reno Gilbert was selected to transfer from 2<sup>nd</sup> Shift to a 1<sup>st</sup> Shift position, which was vacated upon Corporal Cross' promotion.
- f. Employment applications are currently being reviewed to fill a vacant Correctional Officer position, which will likely be on Third Shift once all internal shift movement is complete.
- g. Superintendent Hamelin presented budget transfers for the Board's approval:

From: Prisoners: Other institutions	\$6,519	
To: Fuel		\$6,519
From: Electricity	\$1,573	
To: Vehicle Repairs & Expenses		\$1,573
From: Sergeants' Salaries	\$2,985	
To: Training Salaries		\$2,985
From: Hospitalization	\$6,517	
To: Corrections Supplies & Expenses		\$6,517

From: Hospitalization	\$2,174	
To: Food/Meals		\$2,174
From: Electronic Monitoring	\$1,014	
To: Uniforms		\$1,104

The Commissioners signed the budget transfers.

7. 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. Occupancy for the month of December was 81.6%. In December, there were two (2) admissions and no (0) deaths. There are two potential admissions and one (1) death in January. Of the 74 residents, thirteen (13) are Private Pay and nine (9) residents are Vermont Medicaid. **Totals for 2013: Twenty-eight (28) admissions, seven (7) discharges, and twenty-six (26) deaths.**
- b. Medicaid Rate: The Nursing Hospital received its actual Medicaid rate for January 1, 2014. It was \$158.79. The amount was a bit less than the proposed rate, but still is an increase of \$5.81 from the previous rate of \$152.98.
- c. Nursing Home Compare: CCNH-WS maintained its 5-Star rating for 2013.
- d. MNA Class: The Nursing Hospital will be holding an MNA class during January and February. Two current LNAs have been accepted into the program. They are both very excited.
- e. Therapy Caps: The Nursing Hospital team met with Diane Gorham from AVH Rehab on January 8. AVH is concerned about the therapy caps that have been set for 2014. It appears the Nursing Hospital should be fine since the facility only receives PT services two days per week, OT less often and Speech on an as needed basis. But the Nursing Hospital will have to be aware of any residents who may have received services prior to admission or while in a hospital setting.
- f. Resident Wi-Fi: The wires have all been run for the resident Wi-Fi. The Nursing Hospital is now just waiting for FiberCast for hook up.
- g. Coös County Farm Water System: A separate report on the water system will follow.
- h. Nursing Hours at the Department of Corrections:

2012	MINUTES	Hours	2013	Minutes	Hours
January	2,206	37	January	267	4
February	2,168	36	February	534	9
March	2,801	47	March	632	11
April	2,454	41	April	846	14
May	2,180	36	May	670	11
June	2,811	47	June	361	6

July	988	16	July	383	6
August	864	14	August	388	6
September	1,126	19	September	359	6
October	1,101	18	October	263	4
November	1,026	17	November		2
December	2,007	33	December	0	0

i. Laura presented budget transfers for the Board's approval:

From: Occupational Therapy Supplies	\$200	
From: Health Insurance	\$1,000	
To: Physical Therapy Equipment		\$1,200
From: Workers' Compensation	\$1,500	
To: Activity Aides' Salaries		\$1,500
From: Health Insurance	\$18,300	
To: Fuel		\$18,300
From: Education	\$3,100	
To: Medical & Surgical Supplies		\$3,100
From: Retiree Benefits	\$4,900	
To: Retirement		\$4,900

Commissioner Grenier noted that at the January 8 special meeting, the Board had agreed that Commissioner Samson would be involved in all meetings concerning the water system. Laura stated she would notify Commissioner Samson of all future meetings.

Laura also reported that the VA had notified the nursing homes that they were not interested in placing veterans in the nursing homes because the facilities were not skilled.

Laura reported that she is currently researching and obtaining bids on installing a grease trap at the Nursing Hospital.

Commissioner Samson inquired on the status of handicap accessible parking at the Nursing Hospital. Laura reported that currently there are no flat spots for parking. There was discussion of digging in the bank across from the visitors' entrance. County Treasurer King suggested a chair rail which would require rebuilding the front entrance. Commissioner Grenier suggested a wheelchair lift. The Board asked that options be provided at the next meeting.

8. 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 91. Twelve (12) residents were Private Pay and five (5) residents were Medicaid pending. The average daily census for December was 91.6; there were two (2) admissions in December and three (3) deaths. Totals for year 2013: average

daily census was 96.3, admissions 22 and deaths 27. Residents admitted from: 13 admissions were from home, 5 from a hospital, and 4 from other nursing homes. A report was provided with information on delays in admissions due to Medicaid process. *(A copy of the report is on file.)*

Louise reported at the meeting that all nursing homes in the Berlin area have seen a decrease in admissions.

- b. Survey: The survey window opened on July 31.
- c. Wi-Fi: The Wi-Fi for residents, families and visitors was available as of December 31. The access code/password is available at the Business Office or from the Nursing Supervisor. One of the residents received an iPad from her family after hearing about the wireless access.
- d. Medicaid Rate: The January 1 room rate was set at \$156.01; which is a \$9.88 increase. The expectation for the July 1, 2014 room rate is a decrease back to approximately \$146.13. The current increase for the next 6 months is very much appreciated.
- e. Nursing Home Rating Report: The Nursing Home ended the year with a 5-Star rating; the rating was sustained throughout 2013. The Nursing Home's dedicated, caring staff is the significant factor in the Nursing Home achieving a 5-Star rating.
- f. Staffing: The two current agency nurses end their assignment on February 1. At this time, the Nursing Home may need to keep one agency nurse for an additional 12 week assignment.
- g. Front Entrance Update: Louise met with Jay Poulin from HEB on January 7. The following is a time line of pertinent dates:
  - January 28 and 30 Berlin Daily Sun advertisement for bids.
  - February 12 at 10:00 a.m. pre-bid meeting at CCNH Berlin. Jay Poulin, HEB will meet with contractors to have an on-site review of the project.
  - A Special Commissioners Meeting will be **needed** on **February 26** for the bid opening. Jay Poulin, HEB, will be present; no decision will be made at this meeting on which company will receive the bid. HEB will review all bids and then make a recommendation to the Commissioners within a week, possibly within several days. The recommended bid will be based on the "Lowest Bidder" **AND** in the "Best Interest of the project". In other words, the lowest bidder may not have the best recommendations, products or other issues.
  - The bid will include:
    - 1. Performance Bond - Contractor obtains.
    - 2. Payment Bond - Contractor obtains to ensure subcontractors are paid.
    - 3. Bid Security - If Contractor backs out of bid once awarded; this covers the cost of a new bidding process.
  - Tentative construction start date will be April 14. A tentative substantial completion date will be June 13, this means that the front entrance and parking lot will be serviceable, but minor work may still be needed (punch list items). These dates could change at the contractors request with a reasonable explanation as to why the dates are not acceptable. This would most likely occur at the pre-bid meeting on February 12.



- h. Louise reported that a meeting was held with Primex<sup>3</sup> regarding workers' compensation claims and the Nursing Home finished 2013 below all benchmarks. She added that the Safety Committee has worked extremely hard and the numbers show it.
- i. Louise presented budget transfers for the Board's approval:

From: Health Insurance	\$36,500	
To: Provider Assessment		\$36,500

- 9. 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 sealed bids for the 2014 Tax Anticipation Note were presented to the Commissioners. Four bids were received:

Bank of NH	\$10 Million line of credit at 1.59%
Northway Bank	Did not submit a bid
Passumpsic Bank	\$10 Million line of credit at .99%
Woodsville Guaranty	\$5 Million line of credit at 1.5%

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to award the Tax Anticipation Note to Passumpsic Bank. All approved 3-0.

- b. The tax anticipation note with Passumpsic Bank was paid off on December 23. The total amount borrowed was \$6,000,000 and the total interest incurred was \$15,470.20.
- c. All the County Taxes were received by the year end.
- d. Carrie and the staff have been busy closing out the books for 2013. It is hoped to have the fund balances out to everyone by January 24, 2014.

Commissioner Grenier asked if a date had been set for the audit with Melanson Heath. Carrie replied specific dates in February have not been set.

Carrie presented a budget transfer correction for the Board to sign.

From: Intermediate Nursing Care	\$1,992	
To: Principal: Long-Term Notes		\$1,992

- 10. Other Business:

- a. Sheriff Marcou reported that the Sheriff's Department had been awarded the Operation Stonegarden Grant in the amount of \$49,000.
- b. 2013 Coös County Report Bid: Jennifer provided further information on the County Report bid as requested by the Board at the December 18 meeting. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to award the bid to Smith and Town Printers for 1,300 copies at \$30 per page or \$3,600. All approved 3-0.

- c. Brendan Prusik, Coös County Forester, distributed a Forest Management Plan Proposal for the Coös County-owned properties. *(A copy is on file.)* Commissioner Grenier expressed that 10-15 minutes of discussion was inadequate in his opinion. He suggested spending a day in the field with Mr. Prusik to better understand the proposal prior to a vote. Commissioners Brady and Samson agreed. The Board agreed to meet with Mr. Prusik in West Stewartstown on Wednesday, January 22 at 8 a.m. *(weather permitting)*.
- d. Philip & Donna Caron Easement: Jennifer presented the Easement Deed prepared by the attorneys granting a water easement to Philip and Donna Caron on County land. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to grant the water easement to Philip and Donna Caron on County land. All approved 3-0.
- e. County Farm Lease: Jennifer reviewed the terms of the County Farm leases with David Santamaria per Commissioner Samson's previous request.
  - The lease for the dairy farm land was signed on May 18, 2011 for the duration of five years and expires on May 18, 2016.
  - The lease for the County Farm building was signed in August 2012 for the duration of three years and expires on June 11, 2015.

Jennifer stated that she has not received any notification from Mr. Santamaria on whether he plans to terminate the leases. Commissioner Samson asked if the current lessee could sublease. Jennifer replied that the current lessee could not sublease without written approval. Commissioner Samson stated that Mr. Santamaria has sold all of his equipment and would like to know his future plans. He requested that Mr. Santamaria be invited to attend a future Commissioners' meeting to discuss future plans. Commissioners Brady and Grenier agreed.

11. Unincorporated Places:

- a. 2014 Public Safety Agreements: Town of Carroll, Town of Gorham and Errol Rescue Squad. Linda Harris presented the 2014 Public Safety Agreements to the Board for signatures. The Board signed the agreements.
- b. 2013 Property Taxes Summary: Linda Harris reported that the final property tax bill was mailed on December 31. The combined total for all commitments was \$134,901.
- c. Requests for Abatement of property taxes: Linda Harris presented three requests for abatement of property taxes in Wentworth Location. Linda explained that once the property tax system and the assessing system were merged two of the tax exempt properties did not transfer as tax exempt. The first abatement was in the amount of \$118 and the second in the amount of \$288. The third request, in the amount of \$363, was due to an incorrect account created during the transfer. Linda issued a corrected tax bill, in the amount of \$613. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the abatement requests as presented. All approved 3-0. The Board signed the abatements.

12. Any other public input:

- a. County Treasurer Fred King provided an update on the Hearings on HB 1435-L and HB 1590-L.

Commissioner Brady stated it was mentioned at the hearings that these bills were important to Coös County as all of the representatives were sponsors. Senator Woodburn is also involved.

Commissioner Grenier stated that Groton has received their values and the values are way over the pilot agreement that was signed.

The next regular monthly meeting will be held Wednesday, February 5, 2014, at 9:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Hospital in West Stewartstown, 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