

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Coös County Nursing Home - Berlin, NH
December 13, 2017

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger, Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Sheriff Brian Valerino; Human Resources Coordinator Julie Brunault; and a member of the press.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Superintendent Ben Champagne led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to amend the agenda and add under Hearing of the Public (6.) Chris Gamache and Non-public session (16.) RSA 91-A:3, II(c). 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.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the November 8, 2017, regular meeting, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the November 8, 2017, regular meeting, as presented. All approved 3-0.
4. 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 November 2017 and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of December 2017, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 3-0.
5. Correspondence: County Administrator Jennifer Fish reported that correspondence had been received from Jason Reimers, BCM Environmental & Land Law, PLLC which Ms. Fish had forwarded to the Board. The correspondence was in regards to construction of an unpermitted snowcat road in the Unincorporated Places. Chairman Brady noted that he had received the packet of information and was forwarding the information to the Planning Board. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to place the correspondence on file and to remand the issue to the Planning Board. All approved 3-0.
6. Hearing of the Public:
Chris Gamache, NH Trails Bureau, stated that the request for the rail trail easement for the use of the railroad bed when constructing the water line for the Nursing Hospital had been approved by the Council on Resources Development (CORD). He asked to meet with the Commissioners and Delegation to discuss a possible land easement. The Board suggested meeting prior to the Delegation meeting on January 29 in Berlin.
7. 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. Interlocal Trust announced the maximum not to exceed renewal rate for the 2018-2019 health insurance premiums on December 7. The rate will be 8.1% if the County signs a contract by February 1. If there is no contract agreement signed by February 1, then the rate is subject to change. The final rates will be set in March. A 25% increase was used in the 2018 proposed budget therefore the change in rate will mean \$188,200 in health insurance savings.

At the meeting, Ms. Fish stated that the retirees were not included in the previous calculation. The total savings has been estimated at \$214,042. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to allow the County Administrator to sign the health insurance contract agreement on the Board's behalf. All approved 3-0.

- b. Ms. Fish reported that she was still working with Underwood Engineers on the Water System loan application.

Commissioner Grenier reported that he had been informed of a state program where funds may be available for the water system. Ms. Fish stated she would research and report back to the Board.

- c. Ms. Fish will be attending the North Country Council Board meeting on December 20 in Littleton.
- d. The 45th Parallel Board meeting is on December 21.

Commissioner Samson inquired if a letter had been sent in regards to the Registry of Deeds / Probate reorganization. Ms. Fish replied that she would send a letter.

8. 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:

TOTAL IN FACILITY	22
HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS	19
PRETRIAL	3
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	1
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	0
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	2
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0
FURLOUGH	0
HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES	GRAFTON DOC: 2 PT MALE, 2 PT FEMALE NHSP: 4 HOC MALE, 1 HOC FEMALE
HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION NOVEMBER	23
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY NOVEMBER	686
FEMALE DAYS SERVED NOVEMBER	103 (5 females)
FEDERAL INMATE DAYS SERVED NOVEMBER	2 (1 Detainee)
TOTAL INMATES BOOKED NOVEMBER	20
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED NOVEMBER	21

- a. On November 6, 2017 an HOC inmate was admitted into the facility for a six month sentence for a Controlled Drug Act charge. This inmate was discovered to be in possession of a controlled substance in his person. The inmate was transported to Upper Connecticut Valley Hospital by

Corrections staff for safe removal of the substance. All evidence and reports have been handed over to the New Hampshire State Police.

- b. On November 10, 2017 a follow up budget meeting was held as requested by the member towns that make up the Coös County Recycling Center. This meeting served to give the towns options on purchasing a baler for the Recycling Center. The 2018 budget was approved, with significant capital improvements being budgeted for in 2018 to include a new baler, three new containers and a scale.
- c. Officer Brandon Marsh graduated from the 107th NHAC Corrections Academy on November 17, 2017. Sergeant Brendon McKeage attended to present Officer Marsh his certification as Superintendent Champagne was on vacation.
- d. Superintendent Champagne attended the collaborative session on the implementation of an Active Shooter Policy at the Coös County Nursing Hospital on November 30, 2017. This was a great starting point and a proactive approach to this topic.
- e. Superintendent Champagne has reached out to a local window contractor for a quote on replacing three windows in the Unit #2 Dayroom.
- f. Painting is ongoing and Sergeant McKeage and his staff are doing an excellent job.

Commissioner Brady noted that a comment was made at the public hearing in regards to the high cost per inmate due to the low census. He added that costs will be high due to the implementation of Drug Court and Felonies First. Superintendent Champagne noted that in his opinion low numbers is a good sign of the communities in the area. However, taking the total Department of Corrections budget amount and dividing the amount by the number of inmates is an inaccurate figure.

9. 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 63. Occupancy for the month of November was 80% based on bed count of 84. In November, there were two (2) admissions, three (3) deaths and two (2) discharges to home. Two (2) admissions were scheduled.

Of the 63 residents, thirteen (13) were Private Pay; seven (7) residents were Vermont Medicaid; and five (5) residents were Medicaid Pending for NH. Totals for 2017: Twenty-three (23) admissions, three (3) discharges and thirty-two (32) deaths.

- b. Staffing: The nursing department was down to 44 hours open for RN/LPN. The department has one (1) contract nurse covering the open hours at this time.

There were 144 open LNA hours plus two (2) 40 hour LNAs on FMLA, and one (1) 36 hour and one (1) 32 hour LNA on Workers Comp. Due to the low census, the department is working with less staff and will only fill critical need hours until census increases.

- c. Committee Reports:

- NHAC Executive Committee December 1 in Concord. Ms. Mills attended the meeting with Sue Collins. Jim Monahan of the Dupont Group presented on legislative updates including those on Managed Care and the NH Retirement System.
 - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate: No December meeting, next meeting January 11, 2018.
 - Future of Health Care in the North Country: the last meeting was August 29. The next meeting TBD.
- d. Survey: Coös County Nursing Hospital was surveyed from November 13-15, 2017. It was a regular survey plus a FOSS or Federal Oversight and Support Survey (the State Surveyors were being surveyed themselves by a Federal Surveyor.) These tend to be very intense. The great news is, the Nursing Hospital was deficiency-free for Quality of Life and Quality of Care. Staff did an excellent job and impressed the surveyors with their great care and great attitudes. Ms. Mills reported that she was so proud of them all.

The facility did receive two Life Safety deficiencies. 1) Smoke penetrations in the Laundry behind a dryer, a common deficiency and a fairly straightforward fix. 2) Drills, fire drills and disaster drills. The surveyor was unable to locate documentation on our fire drills for the 4th quarter of 2016. These were in the book and were sent to him after he left. A disaster drill was planned for November 30. There had not been a disaster drill since December 16, 2016 and it is required to conduct two per year. The facility was considered out of compliance. One drill was scheduled on November 30 and a second was scheduled for the week of December 14. These will be the facility's two disaster drills for 2017 and will be back in compliance.

Ms. Mills asked the Board to consider the \$25 survey bonus for staff since the Nursing Hospital was deficiency-free for Quality of Life and Quality of Care. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the \$25 survey bonus. All approved 3-0.

- e. Disaster Drill: On November 30, a Tabletop Disaster Drill was held on Violent Person- Active Shooter. The group included members of the CCNH Disaster Drill subcommittee, the Superintendent of Corrections and representatives from US Border Patrol, NH State Police and Beecher Falls Volunteer Fire Department. An active drill on this particular subject is being planned in the spring.

Commissioner Grenier suggested that Ms. Mills provide Sheriff Valerino with a copy of the policy. The Sheriff has knowledge in this particular area.

- f. Medical Director: Indian Stream Health Center has notified the Nursing Hospital that they will not be renewing the Medical Director contract after December 31, 2017. Thankfully, Dr. Fothergill has reapplied to be the Medical Director again starting January 1, 2018. Ms. Mills is in the process of completing all of the paperwork required by the state.
- g. Preliminary Medicaid Rate: The State of NH released preliminary Medicaid Rates for January 1, 2018. The Nursing Hospital's rate shows a drastic decrease from the current \$164.45 per day to \$150.75 per day. At the time of the picture date in August, resident acuity was quite low triggering a decrease in rate in addition to the state's increase in the "budget adjustment factor" which replaces the "budget neutrality factor" causing a decrease in rates. The nursing homes of

the NHHCA and NHAC are planning to submit letters to the state to voice concerns over these rates.

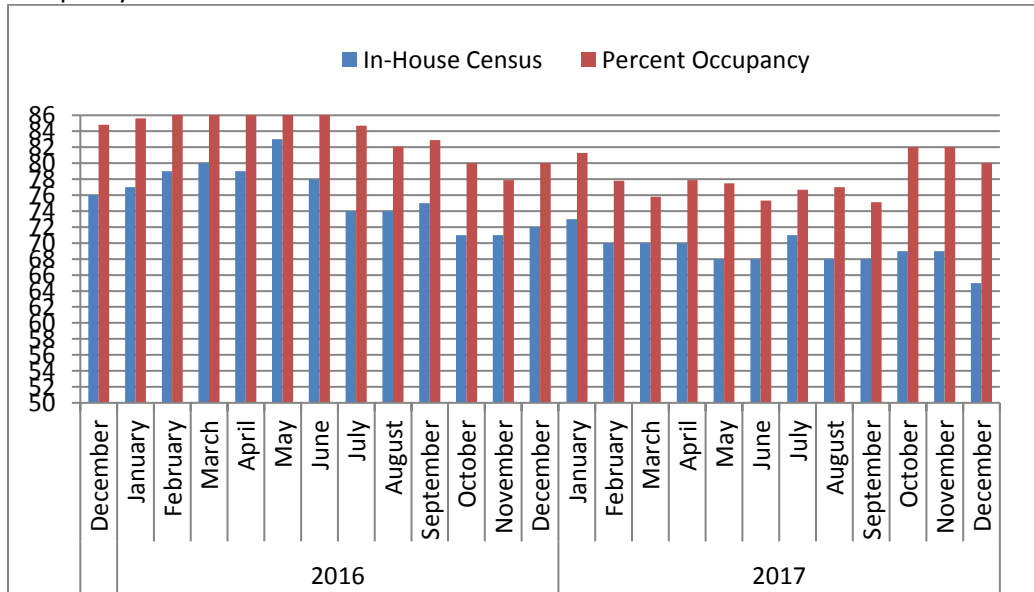
Ms. Mills presented a breakdown of the daily private pay rates for all county nursing homes. She noted that Coös County was the lowest at \$265 per day. The County supplements an estimated \$70 per day on private pay residents. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to increase the private pay rate to \$300 per day as of March 1, 2018. All approved 3-0. Ms. Mills noted that the Vermont rate will also be adjusted to reflect the change.

- h. QAPI: The Nursing Hospital continues to make progress on its QAPI Plan for the new regulations. The first Performance Improvement Project will be selected on December 19.

- i. Nursing Hours at the Department of Corrections:

	2016		2017	
	Minutes	Hours	Minutes	Hours
January	93	1.5		.25
February	37	0.5		.50
March		0		.25
April		1.5		
May	0	0		.10
June				1
July				0
August				0
September				0
October				0
November				0
December				0

- j. Occupancy:



- 10. 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 96. Fourteen (14) residents were private pay; five (5) residents were Medicaid pending. The average daily census for November was 94.7; there were 4 admissions, 0 deaths and 0 discharges. SNF Part A: 5 residents. Part B: 15 residents. Year to Date: average daily census is 89.5, admissions 51, deaths 27 and discharged home 13.
 - b. Nursing Department: There are currently 296 hours of open nursing (RN/LPN) positions (7.40 FTE's). Three agency LPNs are helping with open positions/hours. There are 424 hours of LNA open positions (10.60 FTE's). Two agency LNAs are helping with open positions/hours. A third agency LNA has been asked to help cover these hours. These figures do not reflect employees out on an FMLA.
 - c. LNA Course: The nursing home will be hosting an LNA course from White Mountains Community College beginning on January 18.
 - d. Nursing Tuition Loan Program: The Nursing Home Administrator presented four tuition loan agreements for the Commissioners to sign. The Board signed the four agreements.
 - e. Activities: Project Youth- Gorham Middle Afterschool Program hosted a Veteran's meal on November 9 at the Gorham Middle/High School Cafeteria. Seven of the residents attended the event, the residents enjoyed the community activity.
 - f. Berlin High School job shadow: Several students from the Berlin High School have participated in a job shadow at the facility. Three students were interested in the nursing department and one student was interested in the rehab department.
 - g. Preliminary Medicaid Rate: The preliminary Medicaid rate for January 1 has been currently set at \$160.74, which is a .54 cent decrease from \$161.28. The nursing home administrators from the New Hampshire Health Care Association and the New Hampshire Association of Counties have been encouraged to email letters of concern to the Department of Health and Human Services, addressing the issue that the rates are contrary to legislative intent. An increase of approximately 2% is being withheld from the rates. Nursing home administrators are encouraged to ask "What happened to the 2% increase, where did it go, and why is it not in our Medicaid rate?" Nursing home administrators were also informed that the 2% increase may be paid out in July (the payout possibly being higher than the July 2017 payout).
 - h. QAPI: Policy and Procedure updates were provided to the Commissioners. The policy was recently updated with the new CMS Rules of Participation. QAPI Committee meets monthly to review, update, and develop solutions to institute changes to active performance improvement projects. New projects/concerns are developed during the committee meetings.
11. 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 total amount drawn on the 2017 Tax Anticipation Note to date was \$7,850,000. In 2016, the total for the Tax Anticipation Note was \$5,400,000.
 - b. As of 12/06/2017, the County had received one County Tax Payment from the Town of Lancaster on which was received on November 29.

At the meeting, Ms. Klebe reported that seven towns had paid as of December 12.

- c. The Coös County Investment Policy needs to be reviewed and approved yearly by the Treasurer and the Commissioners. The Treasurer, Sue Collins, reviewed the current Investment Policy and made two very small changes. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to accept the revised Investment policy and to authorize the Chair to sign on the Board's behalf. All approved 3-0.
- d. The Delegation authorized Coös County to borrow during the calendar year 2018 in anticipation of taxes on December 11, 2017. Mrs. Klebe requested authorization to request bids from Coös County banks at the beginning of the year. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to authorize the request of bids for 2018 Tax Anticipation Notes. All approved 3-0.
- e. The Auditors, Melanson Heath will be in West Stewartstown on January 29 and 30 for preliminary audit work and will return February 26 - 28 for fieldwork.

12. Report of the HR Coordinator Julie Brunault. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

HR Activity Report: 11/01/17 – 11/30/17

a. New Hires: 7

Department:	#	Positions
Nursing Hospital	4 (3 PT, 1 FT)	2 LNA'S 2 RN'S
Nursing Home	3 (3 Temps)	3 Unit Aides

b. Separations: 9

Department:	#	
Nursing Hospital	1 (1 FT)	1 RN
Nursing Home	7 (6 PT, 1 Temps)	2 RN 1 LPN 2 LNA'S 1 HSKP Aide 1 PORTER
County	1 (FT)	1 Conservation

Reasons for separation:

- 3 – Not available-terminated by employer
- 3 – other job opportunity
- 2 – voluntary resignation
- 1 – relocating

FMLA/Leave of absences/ADA: 19

Nursing Hospital	4 (2 FT, 2PT)
Nursing Home	15 (3 FT, 12 PT)

- c. Mrs. Brunault attended the New Hampshire Interlocal Trust (NHIT) annual rate meeting in Conway, NH on November 15, 2017. An NHIT representative presented changes that will be happening in 2018.
- d. On November 17, 2017, Mrs. Brunault attended the HR Affiliate meeting held at the PRIMEX building in Concord.
- e. Mrs. Brunault attended the Health Care Workforce Training Program at Weeks Medical Center in Whitefield, NH on December 5, 2017. The meeting was to inform organizations of available grant money for the development of new Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Mrs. Brunault inquired about the LPN program that Laura Mills and Louise Belanger have been trying to implement. Jeff Casey, the outreach specialist stated his organization is willing to work with our facilities to determine if the program would qualify for the grant.
- f. Upcoming events: December 15, 2017 HR Affiliate meeting, Concord, NH

13. Commissioners' Committee Reports:

Commissioner Samson reported that a Cooperative Extension Advisory Meeting had been held the previous week.

14. Other Business:

- a. Budget Transfers: The following budget transfer was approved by the Board:

Coös County Nursing Hospital:

To: 01-05140-9900 Nursing Retiree Benefits	17,060.00	
From: 01-05140-1200 Health Insurance		17,060.00
To: 01-05141-0100 HIM Salary	4,290.00	
From: 01-05150-6500 Fuel		4,290.00
To: 01-05140-0300 LPN Salaries	30,200.00	
From: 01-05150-6500 Fuel		10,000.00
From: 01-05140-1300 Retirement		20,200.00
To: 01-05140-0500 MNA Salaries	11,800.00	
From: 01-05140-1300 Retirement		11,800.00
To: 01-05140-2300 Contract Nurses	52,950.00	
From: 01-05140-1200 Health Insurance		52,950.00
To: 01-05100-8200 Equipment Repair/Maintenance	2,100.00	
From: 01-05100-6800 Communications		2,100.00
To: 01-05130-8200 Dietary Equipment Repair	2,010.00	
From: 01-05130-5000 Food		2,010.00
To: 01-05130-0400 Assistant Dietary Manager	1,650.00	
From: 01-05130-0200 Cooks Salaries		1,650.00

Coös County Nursing Home:

To:	02-05600-0300 Office Staff Salaries	29,300.00	
From:	02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		29,300.00

To:	02-05640-0300 Licensed Practical Nurses' Salary	16,000.00	
From:	02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		16,000.00

To:	02-05600-3600 Office Supplies	1,000.00	
From:	02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		1,000.00

To:	02-05640-2300 Contract Nurses	24,000.00	
From:	02-05640-1200 Health Insurance		24,000.00

Coös County Treasurer:

To:	03-04101-3900 Treasurer Supplies & Expense	300.00	
From:	03-04101-0200 Deputy Treasurer Salary		300.00

Coös County Sheriff's Office:

To:	03-04140-3500 Dues & Fees	3,000.00	
From:	03-04140-3700 Gasoline		3,000.00

To:	03-04140-8200 Vehicle Repair	4,355.00	
From:	03-04140-8100 Vehicle Purchase		4,355.00

To:	03-04140-3900 Other Supplies & Expense	1,200.00	
From:	03-04140-9700 New Equipment		1,200.00

Department of Corrections:

To:	03-06100-2500 Medical Services	10,000.00	
From:	03-06100-5000 Food/Meals		10,000.00

To:	03-06100-1900 Training Supplies & Expenses	2,000.00	
From:	03-06100-5000 Food/Meals		2,000.00

Coös County Conservation District:

To:	03-08400-0900 Longevity	1,300.00	
To:	03-08400-0100 District Administrator Salary	3,000.00	
From:	03-08400-1200 Health Insurance		4,300.00

Coös County Delegation:

To:	03-09300-7400 Delegation Expenses	1,500.00	
From:	03-09300-7500 Contingency Fund		1,500.00

- b. County Administrator Jennifer Fish presented a sidebar agreement between AFSCME and Coös County Nursing Home. The union met with nursing home employees and came to this agreement. Any union member with a doctor's note indicating that the individual cannot stay over during a mandatory stayover at the end of their shift will now be scheduled to work four hours on a day off if the department is short staffed. The Board signed the agreement.

c. County Report Bids: Two bids were received for the printing of the 2017 County Report.

- Liebl Printing: \$20.94 per page (including cover)
- Smith & Town Printers: \$19.91 per page (including cover)

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to award the bid to Smith & Town Printers. All approved 3-0.

15. Unincorporated Places:

- a. Millsfield Campground Assessment: Tax Collector Linda Harris reported that she was notified by the owner of a campground in Millsfield that the campers and mobile homes included in his property assessment did not belong to him. He was not aware that the campers and mobile homes were included in his assessment. He has been paying property taxes on this property since 2014. He also asked if he could receive an abatement for the last four years.

Mrs. Harris spoke with the assessor and was provided with two options:

- Since the town was not informed until recently of these ownerships, it was suggested that the campground owner calculate and collect from the owners of the campers and mobile homes. The burden is upon the taxpayer to notify the town or in this case, an unincorporated place.
- Create new cards for all campers and mobile homes, grant the abatement once the abatement application is received from the taxpayer and issue supplemental tax bills. This option creates a lot of extra work. However, this needs to be done prior to March 31, 2018.

The total estimated tax on the campers and mobile homes was estimated at \$715. Abatements are only for the current tax year.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to agree with Option #1 suggesting that the campground owner collect from the owners of the campers and mobile homes. All approved 3-0.

- b. Millsfield Property Tax Abatement – William Conley: Linda Harris, Tax Collector, presented an abatement for a property in Millsfield. There was a miscalculation in the tax system. A motion was made Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the abatement. All approved 3-0. The Board signed the property tax abatement.

16. Any Other Public Input:

Larry Barker, UNH/Cooperative Extension, spoke to the Board regarding the support staff request discussed at the public hearing. Mr. Barker understood that the \$5,300 increase going forward was a tough request. Commissioner Grenier stated that he was not in favor. The position should remain a county employee. Commissioner Samson was in favor of the position becoming a UNH employee. Commissioner Brady asked the County Administrator's opinion. Ms. Fish replied that there was a proposed \$5,300; however, she questioned the increase to the budget in the future. She also questioned the liability of a UNH employee supervising a county employee. Commissioner Brady noted that the County would have no control of future costs. The Board agreed that the position would remain as a county employee; however, the decision could be revisited in the future.

Sheriff Valerino reported that a small gathering was held for Judge Desjardins who has retired. There has been a delay in the acquisition of the new vests.

17. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c) at 11:16 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to come out of non-public at 11:23 a.m.

The January meeting has been scheduled for January 10, 2018 at the North Country Resource Center in Lancaster, NH.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:31 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk