

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
North Country Resource Center - Lancaster, NH
June 10, 2015

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Superintendent Craig Hamelin; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Sheriff Gerry Marcou; Chief Deputy Keith Roberge; County Treasurer Fred King; Thomas Claflin, Sonja Sheldon; Mark Sandoe and members of the press.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:05 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. He asked everyone to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of the Agenda:
A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to accept the agenda as presented. All approved 3-0.
3. Approval of the Minutes of the May 6, 2015 regular meeting & April 22, 2015, special meeting:
A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the May 6, 2015 regular meeting and the revised minutes of the April 22, 2015 special meeting. 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 May and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of June, to meet all payroll obligations and pay all other obligations due during the month. All approved 3-0.
5. Correspondence:
Jennifer reported that the Board had received a letter from Chief Richard Lapoint on behalf of the Coös County Chiefs of Police supporting the County Attorney's request for additional funding to adequately staff the County Attorney's office. *These, funds if granted, would help the County Attorney's office to manage an increasingly complex and voluminous caseload. The funding would also result in assistance to local law enforcement agencies with prosecutions within the 1st Circuit Court, focusing on Lancaster and Colebrook Divisions, as well as Berlin. This would enhance the ability of the County Attorney's office to present cases before the grand jury, and to stay on top of an ever-increasing complex volume of case submittals from all the local and State law enforcement agencies operating within the county.*

Commissioner Grenier asked if any request had been received from the County Attorney's office. Jennifer replied that she had not received any notice but anticipated the request would be part of the 2016 budget.
6. Hearing of the public:
 - a. John Scarinza, Coös County Planning Board Chair, stated that he had a few items to discuss with the Commissioners which involved the proposed Balsams project.

- One of the items is how to do the inspections that is typically done by a building inspector. There are two considerations: hire a private party or per statute, there is the opportunity to hire the State Fire Marshal's office to do the function for the County. After providing the Board with a copy of the statute (155 A7), Mr. Scarinza stated that the Planning Board had voted to recommend to the Board of Commissioners that the Commissioners submit a written request to the NH Fire Marshal to represent Coös County as code enforcement officers and inspectors for The Balsams Project. Commissioner Grenier asked if the fire marshal would sign the certificate of occupancy and Mr. Scarinza replied in the affirmative. Mr. Scarinza also added that there should be a person from the Planning Board to be the contact person with the fire marshal's office. Commissioner Samson asked who would be responsible for payment to the fire marshal's office. Mr. Scarinza replied that the developer would be responsible. There would be no cost to the county. A motion was made by Commissioner Samson, seconded by Commissioner Grenier to request the State Fire Marshall to act as the building inspector for the anticipated Balsams project. A written letter of request will be submitted to the Fire Marshall's office. All approved 3-0.
- Mr. Scarinza stated that it is anticipated that the developers may be requesting a planned development sub-district. The County's zoning ordinances are geared mostly toward residential projects. As part of the process, the developers may request changes/waivers in variances. In anticipation, the services of a professional planner will be needed to assist the planning board to walk through these changes; and, the services of a municipal land use attorney to review the documents to protect the County. He has spoken with Tara Bamford of North Country Council. The NCC is available to assist with the review when the time comes. This would be a contractual relationship paid by the developer. Mr. Scarinza has also spoken with Attorney Bernie Wa, land use attorney, who is also available to work on the planning board's behalf. Mr. Scarinza requested authorization to create working relationships with both. Commissioner Brady asked that a letter of agreement noting that the developers will be responsible for payment of the services will be required prior to incurring any costs. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to engage the North Country Council to assist the County with changes in zoning and Attorney Bernie Wa, municipal services, subject from a letter of affirmation from the developer agreeing the pay for the costs. All approved 3-0. Mr. Scarinza will contact both individuals to request a contract for the Board's review and approval.
- Building permits on private roads, owned or leased properties: Mr. Scarinza stated that individuals are purchasing traditional camps and turning them into possible year-round residences. Private roads are not maintained year round and there is a provision in the State statutes: "in order for a building permit to be issued it has to have a frontage on a public way." Many of the camps are not located on public ways but on private roads. Exception: the local governing body after review and comment of the planning board has voted to authorize the issuance of building permits for the erection of buildings on said private roads and the municipality neither assumes responsibility for maintenance of said private road nor liability for any damages resulting from use thereof and prior to the issuance of the building permit, the applicant shall produce evidence that notices the limits of municipality responsibility and liability and has been recorded in the Coös County Registry of Deeds for the lot upon which the building permit has been sought.

Mr. Scarinza suggested that the County be brought up to date with the current statute. He would like to include a waiver of liability from camp owners as part of the application process. Mr. Scarinza asked the Board to authorize the Planning Board to issue building permits with the caveat that waives the County from liability and is recorded in the County Registry of Deeds. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to allow the Planning Board to begin enforcement per RSA 764:41 to be included with building permits from this point forward. Commissioner Brady asked that the changes be brought forward to the Board at the next meeting. All approved 3-0.

- Mr. Scarinza thanked Jennifer for all of her assistance with the Planning Board.

- b. Sheriff Marcou noted that there could be an impact on the Sheriff's Department with the anticipated Balsams project. He would like to know if he will need to budget for extra staff. Commissioner Brady agreed and suggested that Sheriff Marcou have a discussion with the developer.

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:

COUNTY

- a. Jennifer attended the State-County Finance Committee meeting on Monday, June 8, 2015 in Concord.

At the meeting, Jennifer reported that meeting included the county representatives, Commissioner Toumpas and members of his staff. The group discussed long term care and proposed meeting every two weeks over the summer, if possible.

- b. The two CDBG grants, Bartlett School and Brookside Apartments have been funded and claims are being processed for reimbursement.
- c. A meeting was held on May 20 with Mike Metcalf, Underwood Engineers; Jay Poulin, HEB Engineers; Craig Hamlin, Superintendent of Corrections; Laura Mills, Nursing Hospital Administrator; Ron Crawford, Plant Manager; Commissioner Rick Samson and Jennifer to review and confirm the current issues with the water system. The engineers are now reviewing all options for a solution and are due to report back in early July.
- d. Jennifer presented a letter of support from the Commissioners to support the donation of the Emerson Sporting Goods building by Granite State Bank to CEDC. Jennifer read from the letter *The currently vacant building, centrally located in Coös County on Route 3 in Groveton, would be turned back into a community asset and repurposed with powerful Workforce Development, Education and Entrepreneurial capabilities for Coös County and surrounding communities. The building will contain a commercial kitchen, an open-to-the-public cafe, a "made local" retail store, training rooms and professional office space. It is our understanding that the goal is to have this building financially self-sustainable within 3 years.* The Board signed the letter.

UNINCORPORATED PLACES

- a. An advertisement was posted in county wide newspapers soliciting interested citizens to serve on the Coös County Zoning Board of Adjustment. Jennifer received one letter from an interested applicant, PJ Cyr of Gorham.

The Board asked Jennifer to send a letter of interest to all of the towns in Coös County.

- b. Ralph Perron of the US Forest Service has made a written request to change an E911 address in Green's Grant. The current listed address is 1568 NH Route 16. The forest service would like to change the address to Camp Dodge Road. Mr. Perron states that summer residents are more familiar with the Camp Dodge name and it would assist emergency medical personnel to better identify the location if they are calling for assistance. Also, the forest service is upgrading an existing phone service and the phone company is requesting a street name and building number that is more precise than the current address. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the 911 change in Green's Grant. All approved 3-0.
 - c. The Planning Board will meet on Tuesday, June 23 at 6 pm in Lancaster.
8. 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:

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|---|--|
| TOTAL IN FACILITY | 33 |
| HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS | 20 |
| PRETRIAL | 13 |
| NH STATE PRISON INMATES | 0 |
| OTHER COUNTY INMATES | 0 |
| ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM | 2 |
| WORK RELEASE PROGRAM | 0 |
| HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES | 16 |
| HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL | CARROLL DOC: 1 PT MALE, 1 HOC FEMALE GRAFTON DOC: 1 HOC MALE, 5 HOC FEMALE, 2 PT FEMALE NHSP: 3 PT MALE, 2 HOC MALE VERMONT DOC: 1 HOC MALE |
| AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION MAY | 38 |
| MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY MAY | 1164 |
| FEMALE DAYS SERVED MAY | 243 (12 females) |
| TOTAL INMATES BOOKED MAY | 31 |
| TOTAL INMATES RELEASED MAY | 34 |

- a. The most recent hire, Officer Jordan Wheelock, successfully completed the 8-week Field Training Program on May 19. He has been assigned to work on Second Shift.
- b. Scott Grassetto, Community Programs Corporal, submitted his resignation, effective June 12. Cpl. Grassetto started with the Department in 2007 and has managed the Coös County Recycling Center for the past 3 years, raising the operation of the program up to the highest of standards. Superintendent Hamelin thanked Cpl. Grassetto for his years of service and dedication and wished him the best of luck in his new career. The DOC is in the process of posting this position and filling it with an individual who can continue the successful management of the property and program, not only to benefit rehabilitation efforts, but for the 7 member towns of the

Recycling Center. At the meeting, Superintendent Hamelin announced that second shift Sergeant Ben Champagne had been selected to replace Cpl. Grassette. The second shift sergeant position has been posted.

- c. A candidate has been tentatively hired to fill a vacant Second Shift position. Further details will be provided once all conditions of employment have been met. A projected start date of June 14 has been set.
 - d. Selectmen of all seven member towns of the Coös County Recycling Center have signed and returned the 2015-2018 agreements which were mailed out. This demonstrates how valuable the recycling program's service is to the area communities and the continued support and confidence of the towns is appreciated.
 - e. On May 29, the Coös County Chiefs' Association meeting was held at the facility for the first time. Approximately 30 representatives from Federal, State, County and local agencies attended the very informative meeting.
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 71. The occupancy for the month of May was 78.4%. In May, there were two (2) admissions and one (1) death. One admission was planned for June 4, another for June 26 and a third in the works. Of the 71 residents, sixteen (16) are Private Pay. Only one (1) resident is Medicaid Pending. Six (6) residents are Vermont Medicaid.

Totals for 2015: Fourteen (14) admissions, one (1) discharge and eighteen (18) deaths.

- b. Medicaid Rate: The Nursing Hospital received the lump sum payment (in lieu of raised rates) of \$48,350.47 in May. The proposed Medicaid rate for July 1, 2015 was received. The new projected rate is \$151.75, a decrease of .87 from the current rate of \$152.62.
- c. Nursing Staff: Currently there are two 32 hour nursing positions open on the 3-11 shift, a 24 hour and an 8 hour position open on the 7-3 shift. Two contract nurses continue to cover the open hours. *Budget Transfer requested.
- d. Another Retirement: Gail Goerke who occupies the office outside my door has announced her date for retirement after 21 years of service to Coös County. Her last day will be June 15.
- e. Nursing Hours at HOC:

| 2014 | Minutes | Hours | 2015 | Minutes | Hours |
|----------|---------|-------|----------|---------|-------|
| January | 22 | <0.5 | January | 30 | 0.5 |
| February | 37 | <1 | February | 0 | 0 |
| March | 31 | 0.5 | March | 0 | 0 |
| April | 0 | 0 | April | 183 | 3 |

Commissioner Samson requested an update on the water system. Jennifer replied that she needs to research old county records to obtain information on old wells at the recycling center and at the former administrator's house. Superintendent Hamelin noted that the leak may be between the

recycling center and the house. Ron Crawford, Plant Manager, suggested hiring a water firm to evaluate the water pump at the county house. All approved 3-0.

The Board agreed that a decision needs to be made in regards to the county house.

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 97. Seven (7) residents were Private Pay. Five (5) residents were Medicaid pending. The average daily census for May was 96.6; there were no admissions, no deaths. Year to date: average daily census is 94.5, admissions 17, deaths 13, transfers/discharged 2.
- b. Survey: The Nursing Home is in compliance as of May 26 regarding the 4 minor Life Safety tags relating to fire/smoke barriers, fire damper testing, generator inspection, and non-compliant plug strip.
- c. Louise presented the propane bids to the Commissioners. The bids were as follows:

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| CN Brown | 1.089/gallon |
| Suburban Propane | 1.3374/gallon |
| Amerigas | 1.38/gallon |
| Irving | 1.20/gallon |

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to award the propane bid to CN Brown for 17,000 gallons at \$1.089 per gallon. All approved 3-0.

- d. Medicaid rate setting appeal: The nursing homes have been approved for a one time payout, based on the monies that were withheld from the Medicaid rate setting calculations for January 1, 2015. CCNH in Berlin should be receiving \$69,276.21. The Nursing Home also received its proposed Medicaid room rate to begin July 1, \$153.32. This is an increase of 19 cents. This is only a proposed rate, it may change.
- e. National Nursing Home Week: "Bring on the Fiesta" was celebrated from May 10 to the 16. The residents enjoyed a week packed with various South-of-the-Border Fiesta activities, from Jalapeno Bingo to the Mexican Hat Dance. Employees enjoyed a week of treats and breakfast on Thursday, May 14. Employees were also given a Coös County Nursing Home mug along with a package of sandwich crackers.
- f. Pharmacy Services: PharMerica will be replacing Omnicare as the facility's provider of pharmacy services on July 1. This will be a positive change for the home and residents.
- g. New Hampshire Interlocal Trust: Mary Kimmel from NHIT was at the home on May 19 to meet with Management staff in all departments. Mary presented a workshop on "Providing Effective Feedback". Providing thoughtful feedback can help build a more effective team and improve job performance.

- h. Labor Law Training: Louise attended the local NH Department of Labor training session on May 12. The session covered the NH Labor laws and how to stay compliant. The session was informative and Louise will need to make a few changes to remain in compliance with new rules.
- i. Power Outage February of 2014 Update: Repairs will take place June 16 -18. On June 17, the nursing home will be on generator power all day.

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. \$500,000 was transferred on May 27 from the TAN to the General Fund. Another \$500,000 was transferred on June 4.
- b. The County provides employees with a Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA). The County makes an HRA contribution to offset deductibles. The fee for this service is paid by NH Interlocal Trust and they have contracted with Concepts in Benefits in Bedford to provide this service to the County. Recently, Concepts in Benefits was acquired by Total Administrative Services Corp (TASC) of Madison Wisconsin. All services remain the same with the change from CBI to TASC.
- c. On May 22, the County Nursing Homes received funds from the State of NH for the distribution of available state fiscal year 2014 unspent surplus funds. The amounts received were: \$48,350.47 for the West Stewartstown Nursing Home and \$69,276.21 for the Berlin Nursing Home.
- d. The necessary data regarding current Coös County employees & retirees has been completed. With this information the Actuary can begin the GASB 45 Actuarial Services, which is expected to take about 30 days to complete. Once the report is complete, the Auditor, Melanson & Heath will be able to complete the 2014 Audit.
- e. A payment was received on May 19 from the US Fish & Wildlife Service for \$12,324. The Refuge Revenue Sharing Act provides for annual payments to local governments for lands under the administration of the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The payments are funded from revenues generated from these lands and from a supplemental congressional appropriation. The payment was allocated as follows: Cambridge \$399.91 and Wentworth Location \$11,924.09.

12. Other Business:

a. Budget Transfers:

Laura Mills, NHA, presented a budget transfer request for the Nursing Hospital:

| | | | |
|-------|--|-------------|-------------|
| To: | 01-05140-2300 Nursing - Contract Nurses | \$46,100.00 | |
| From: | 01-05140-0200 Nursing - Registered Nurses Salaries | | \$46,100.00 |

The Board approved and signed the budget transfer request.

b. Coös County Farm Lease:

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the farm lease and barn lease between CJEJ Farm/Blue Mountain Dairy and the County of Coös. All approved 3-0. The Board signed the documents.

13. Unincorporated Places:

a. Millsfield Presidential Primary:

Jennifer reported that she had received via email correspondence from Wayne Urso in Millsfield on May 18. The letter indicated the Millsfield residents' preference for the voting booths. The style selected was tabletop corrugated plastic privacy screens at a cost of \$19.50 each or an 8-pack with storage box at a cost of \$184.99. These would be easily stored.

Commissioner Brady stated that he had no issue with the request. He added that he had recently spoken with Secretary of State Gardner who asked to meet with Commissioner Brady to discuss options. Commissioner Brady added that a decision will be made at the July 8 meeting. Commissioner Samson did not agree with the corrugated and that other options should be looked at.

Tom Claflin, resident of Millsfield, noted that a list of other incidentals were included in the correspondence as well as a suggested request for security. Sheriff Marcou did not think that security was necessary.

b. Yield Tax Warrants: Linda Harris presented several yield tax warrants and certifications which the Board approved and signed.

c. Crawford's Purchase: Linda Harris presented to the Board an abatement of yield taxes in the amount of \$461. The amount of the abatement was the difference between the security deposit retained by the County and the actual yield tax. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the request of abatement of yield taxes in the amount of \$461. All approved 3-0.

d. 2014 Property Taxes Abatement Requests: Linda Harris reported that four abatement applications were reviewed by the firm Commerford, Nieder, Perkins, LLC.

- Henry Gosselin Living Trust (SU 0203-018 land only): Granted
- Henry & Paul Gosselin (SU 0203-018B building only): Denied
- Mark & Rachel Eastman (SU 0204-001 land/building): Denied
- Ronald Baillargeon (MI 0214-016/1 building only): Denied

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the 2014 property tax abatement for the Henry Gosselin Living Trust in the amount of \$226.46. All approved 3-0.

14. Any other input:

a. Jennifer reported that she had received correspondence from a retiree with concerns to the changes in the retiree benefit and prescription plan effective June 1. The Board also received a copy of the letter. Jennifer noted that she had made the changes to the plan based on County policy. The retiree disagreed. She has spoken with Al Jones of NH Interlocal Trust who provided information on the prescription plan. Jennifer asked the Board's input. Commissioner Grenier stated that he agreed with the communication and the retirees should revert back to the old plan. Commissioner Samson asked for Jennifer's opinion. Jennifer replied that she did not see that she went against County policy. The handbook states "...will be covered by a policy provided by the County with substantially the same coverage as provided to active employees."

County Treasurer King asked when the changes in the retiree plan were discussed. In his opinion, it is a substantial change of an agreement that the Commissioners' had with employees. It is not the Administrator's function to make that change. Commissioner Grenier replied that the Board directed Jennifer to look at the prices. The Commissioners gave the Administrator authorization to look at all plan options. He admits an error was made. Commissioner Samson stated that he was against changing the cost to retirees. However he was not opposed to discuss the issue further and make necessary changes. Commissioner Brady asked that the issue be discussed at a further meeting. His understanding was that the new plan was saving the County a lot of money. Jennifer stated that the County will go back to the old benefit. However, the retirees who do not have the benefit of having the County pay for their health insurance will drop out as the plan is not affordable. Jennifer stated that the Berlin Nursing Home would have saved \$23,000. Louise stated that she did not have a problem with Jennifer's decision and there were no complaints from retirees. Commissioner Brady asked that the item be placed on the July 8 agenda.

- b. Commissioner Samson asked about the status of the Employee Surveys. Jennifer replied that she had to meet with Superintendent Hamelin and Louise. She has met with Laura. Commissioner Brady asked that she meet with them prior to the July 8 meeting. At which time the Board would meet and discuss Jennifer's reports. Commissioner Samson asked if the Board would meet to discuss the findings, alone. Commissioner Brady replied he had no problem meeting with the other two Commissioners but asked to do so after meeting with Jennifer.
- c. Commissioner Samson stated that he had obtained a copy of the decommissioning agreement which had the signatures of Commissioner Brady and Commissioner Grenier. Commissioner Brady stated that Commissioner Samson refused to sign the document. Commissioner Samson asked how long the agreement was for and if and when will the Board meet to discuss the decommissioning agreement. Commissioner Grenier replied that the agreement had a 10-year clause reopener to look at the financial part. Commissioner Samson asked if the Board planned on meeting to discuss to increase the cost of the agreement. He stated that the amount should be revised as the amounts currently in place are not sufficient. Commissioner Grenier stated that the reason for the 10 year reopener was to adjust for inflation.
- d. Commissioner Brady set the following meeting dates for the months of July, August and September:
 - Wednesday, July 8, 2015, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Hospital
 - Wednesday, July 22, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Hospital
 - Wednesday, August 19, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Coös County Nursing Home
 - Wednesday, September 9, 2015 at 10:00 a.m. at the Errol Town Hall.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 11:30 a.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Rick Samson, Clerk