

Coös County Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Coös County Nursing Hospital - W. Stewartstown, NH
February 12, 2020

Present: Commissioners Tom Brady, Paul Grenier and Rick Samson; County Administrator Jennifer Fish; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Superintendent Ben Champagne; Nursing Hospital Administrator Laura Mills; Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede (*arrived at 9:44 a.m.*); Sheriff Brian Valerino; Captain Keith Roberge; HR Coordinator Julie Brunault; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris; Register of Deeds Leon Rideout; members of the public and press.

1. Commissioner Brady opened the Commissioners' meeting at 9:11 a.m. and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Register of Deeds Leon Rideout led the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Approval of the Agenda: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the agenda, as presented. All approved 3-0.
3. Approval of the Minutes from the January 15, 2020, regular meeting, as presented: A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2020, 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 January and to authorize the Treasurer, during the month of December, 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 she had received a letter from NH Department of Transportation dated December 16, 2019 but received on January 22, 2020. The letter from Commissioner Victoria Sheehan stated that the State had determined that there were two areas of highway right-of-way, adjacent to Route 26 in Cambridge, which were no longer needed for highway use.

John "Chip" Johnson explained that this was a result of a land value trade with the US Fish & Wildlife Service for land along Route 16. The section of the land will be conveyed to the USFWS.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson that Coös County has no interest or necessity for the public right-of-way in Cambridge as described in the Department of Transportation correspondence. All approved 3-0.
6. Hearing of the Public: There was no public comment.
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. Ms. Fish stated that a Certificate of Authorizing Resolution was needed in order for the Department of Corrections' union members to participate in the Health Trust Pooled risk management program for the group medical benefit plan. The plan will be effective February 1, 2020-June 30, 2020 for SEA Corrections Officers. The resolution read as follows:

RESOLVED: That Coös County shall participate as a Member in the HealthTrust pooled risk management program for the provision of group medical and/or other benefit plans in accordance with the "Application and Membership Agreement" and NH RSA 5-B.

RESOLVED: That Jennifer Fish, County Administrator is hereby authorized and directed to execute and deliver to HealthTrust, on behalf of Coös County, the "Application and Membership Agreement" in substantially the form presented to this meeting.

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

- b. The County Administrator presented the 2020 Public Safety Agreements and EMS Agreements from the town of Gorham. The total annual Public Safety Agreement is \$14,000 for 7 unincorporated places. The EMS agreement is for 5 years with incremental increases in the first 2 years. The requested amount for 2020 is \$36,865 which is an increase of \$6,265.00

The Board requested that a representative from the Town of Gorham attend the next Commissioners' meeting.

- c. Coös County Planning Board: The County Administrator reported that a motion was needed to request the NH Fire Marshal's office to act in its official capacity to be the building inspector pursuant to NH RSA 155-A:7 for the Mt. Washington Railway Company's maintenance facility project in Thompson and Meserve Purchase. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson that the NH Fire Marshal's office act in its official capacity as the building inspector pursuant to NH RSA 155-A:7 for the Mt. Washington Railway Company's maintenance facility project in Thompson and Meserve Purchase. All approved 3-0.
- d. The County Administrator reported that she will be attending a meeting on February 18 in Lincoln regarding a broadband initiative for Coös and Grafton Counties.
- e. The NHAC Executive Board Meeting and Steering Committee Meeting was rescheduled to February 14.
- f. The North Country Council Meeting is scheduled for February 20.
- g. Ms. Fish requested that the Board approve the transfer of Greg Sipple as an alternate to a regular board member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to recommend the transfer of Greg Sipple from alternate to regular board member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment to the Delegation. All approved 3-0. Commissioner Samson asked if that left an alternate seat opening and Ms. Fish replied in the affirmative.
- h. Ms. Fish reported that an email was received from Jennifer E. Reczek, NH DOT Project Manager for the Errol/Dummer project that was discussed at the previous meeting. She asked that the following information be provided to the Board:

"This project is the second project being considered on NH 16 between Dummer and Errol. The project runs along the Androscoggin River starting just beyond the Dummer-Cambridge town

and continues approximately 1.34 miles north towards Errol. The purpose of the project is to address the poor condition of the roadway and provide a sustainable roadway that maintains the connectivity of the corridor, minimizes long-term maintenance and risk resulting from the proximity of the Androscoggin River, and preserves the scenic quality of the surrounding area.

The design team has considered four alternatives: On-line, Partial Lane shift, Offline, and Offline AE (full shift with realignment). NHDOT has had initial coordination with environmental and cultural agencies to determine the preliminary impact of each alternative. Based on the design and coordination that has been done, the Department is looking to advance the Offline AE alternative, which would shift the roadway away from the river, and realign a portion of the road to minimize wetland and floodplain impacts.”

The advertising date for this project will be in 2022, not 2020. The project is currently not fully funded, however an increase in project cost has been included in the 2021-2030 Draft Ten Year Transportation Improvement plan.

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	11
PRETRIAL	11
NH STATE PRISON INMATES	2
OTHER COUNTY INMATES	5
ELECTRONIC MONITORING PROGRAM	1
WORK RELEASE PROGRAM	0
FURLOUGH	0
HELD AT OTHER FACILITIES HOC= HOUSE OF CORRECTIONS PT= PRETRIAL	GRAFTON DOC: 3 HOC FEMALE, 1 PT FEMALE HILLSBOROUGH DOC: 1 PT MALE SPU: 1 PT MALE
AVERAGE DAILY POPULATION JANUARY	20
MALE DAYS SERVED IN FACILITY JANUARY	862
FEMALE DAYS SERVED JANUARY	134 (7 females)
FEDERAL INMATE DAYS SERVED JANUARY	0
TOTAL INMATES BOOKED JANUARY	19
TOTAL INMATES RELEASED JANUARY	19

- a. Bill Wiley from Freightliner of New Hampshire was on site with a truck similar to what will be ordered for the Coös County Recycling Center. This was a helpful opportunity to ensure that all the necessary functions and options are met before the truck is ordered.
- b. The Unit #2 Dorm painting project has been completed. This project included painting of the entire dorm area including ceilings, walls, heat registers, bunks, fixtures and floors. Superintendent Champagne stated that he was very proud of the work that was done and expressed a special thank you to all of the staff who helped complete this project. He sincerely appreciate it and it was a job well done.
- c. The pretrial inmate that has had an ongoing pre-existing medical issue had surgery at the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center on January 15, 2020. This inmate was at the hospital from January 15 through January 17 on a medical furlough. This three day stay at the hospital was

supervised by the Coös County Sheriff's Department. The Superintendent stated that he fully understood how intrusive this was to the Sheriff's Department operations and thanked them for such an outstanding work relationship and making this a seamless endeavor.

- d. Annual defensive tactics training was held over the month of January at the county house. More training will be done over the month of February.

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 78. Occupancy for the month of January was 94.9% based on a bed count of 85. In January, there were two (2) admissions, one (1) discharge and one (1) death. There have been two (2) deaths so far in February.

Six admissions were being worked on but NH Medicaid is causing delays while waiting for approval. If the Nursing Hospital does not wait for the approval, the facility may lose up to 14 days of pay or risk a last minute denial resulting in not being paid at all.

Of the 78 residents, fourteen (14) are Private Pay, eleven (11) residents are Vermont Medicaid, six (6) residents are Medicaid Pending, (five for NH and one for VT.) In many instances, residents are dying while on Medicaid Pending. Once they die, the state closes the case without paying. The Social Services Director and Resident Accounts are attending meetings with NH Medicaid to work through these cases. It continues to be a struggle. The NH Medicaid offices are overworked, understaffed, and disorganized. There have been more changes in personnel in the past month. Resident Accounts and Social Services are putting many hours in every week attempting to get the backlog of issues corrected.

Totals for 2020: Two (2) admissions, three (3) deaths, and one (1) discharge.

At the meeting, the Nursing Hospital Administrator reported that the Medicaid office is slow on approving people who are submitting applications. She is holding off on admission until the individual is approved.

Commissioner Samson asked for the cost of the Medicaid pending on deceased residents that the state has not paid. Commissioner Grenier suggested asking Chairman Moynihan to send correspondence to DHHS requesting payment on these residents.

- b. Staffing Nursing Department: There are 156 hours open for RN/LPN (3.9 FTE). Two (2) contract LPNs are covering the hours. There are 316 open LNA hours (7.9 FTE). Two (2) 32 hour LNAs and one (1) 36 hour LNA are out on Workers Comp and three (3) on FMLA. Six (6) contract LNAs are covering some of the hours.
- c. LNA and MNA Classes: The LNA Class graduated four (4) students on January 28, 2020. Three (3) of them have already accepted positions.
- d. IT: Staff continues working through many IT issues with SNS and printer issues with Porter Office.

- e. Facility Issues:
 - The card reader was replaced at the employee entrance with a key pad. So far, it is working much better than the card reader.
 - Contractors are currently working on switching the sprinkler system over to W. Stewartstown water.
 - Renovations on 2nd Floor replacing the wallpaper with paint and wainscoting is nearing completion. It is amazing how it lifts and brightens the hallways.
- f. QAPI: Staff continues to make progress on the QAPI Plan for the new regulations. Staff continues to work on the PIPs for SBAR and Communication and for making the admissions process smoother.
- g. Final Medicaid Rate: The facility received its final Medicaid rate for January 1, 2020. The rate includes the promised 3.1% and has been set at to be \$165.77, an increase of \$7.08 over the current rate of \$158.69. The Vermont Medicaid rate did not show as drastic an increase due to the odd fluctuations of the MQIP rates. The Vermont rate has been set at \$214.77.
- h. Family/Resident/Staff Concerns: No Ombudsman Reports were filed in January.
- i. Survey: At the meeting, the Nursing Hospital Administrator reported that the surveyors had arrived Tuesday, February 11.
- j. Dentist: The search still continues for replacement dental services for the residents. Currently, residents are being assessed by their PCP and seen by area dentists as needed. The nursing home is paying the dental bills.
- k. Committee Reports:
 - NHAC Executive Committee: The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2020.
 - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate: The next meeting is scheduled for February 13, 2020.
 - Workforce Development: No new meetings have been set.
 - UCVH Board of Directors: February 27, 2020.
- l. Nursing Hours at the Department of Corrections:

	2019	2020
	Minutes	Minutes
January	59	2
February	5	
March	53	

- m. At the meeting, the Nursing Hospital Administrator requested out of state travel to Vermont for the Dietary Director and Assistant Dietary Director to attend a food service show in April. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to approve the out of state travel for the CCNH WS Dietary Director, Assistant Dietary Director and the CCNH Berlin Dietary Manager. All approved 3-0.

10. Report of the Berlin Nursing Home Administrator Lynn Beede. The written report that was submitted to the Board in advance of the meeting was as follows:

- a. Census: The current census was 96; Private Pay 14; Medicaid Pending 0; and Hospice 2. The average daily census for January was 95; Admissions 9; Deaths 4; Discharges 6. Year to date average daily census was 95.
- b. SNF/RNP/CMI: Part A 10; Part B 22; PT 8; OT 4; ST 10. On 2/6/2020 our Case Mix Index (CMI) was 0.9818; on 12/23/19 it was 0.8963. This is a significant increase, with the goal to achieve greater than 1.0 before the end of the month. Staff are working diligently to educate frontline staff in order to capture the best rate possible (i.e., education and monitoring of coding, reporting of resident mobility/ADL needs, behaviors, etc. Documentation in-servicing provided by RNP and MDS is key.)
- c. Nursing Shortage: Open positions: RN/LPN 12.3 FTEs; LNA 24.5 FTEs. There are agency contracts to fill some of the open hours: LPN 7; RN 1; LNA 5.
- d. LNA Program: The CCNH-Berlin Training Program is moving forward. The format for submission to the NHBON was not met, updates are underway at this time. Plan is to have submitted ahead of the next meeting.
- e. QAPI: Process improvement projects, to include: Weight Loss; Pain; State Mandated Reports – none for January; Medications; Exit Interviews; Music and Memory Program; Wheelchairs; Antibiotic Stewardship; Care Planning; Employee Retention. SB 255 – Dementia Training Requirements 2/6/20
- f. Facility License: Received and posted in lobby. All licensing bodies have been notified of NHA appointment.
- g. Resident Events: For special events, the Activity Department held an “Old Fashioned” afternoon of games and snacks, Birthday Party with Dick & Ray, Pub Night with Up Country, Games with Boy Scouts, Cabin Fever Bingo, Special Meal, Pub Night with Brad & Mike, as well as many other individualized resident-centered activities. Seniors Aid NH Luncheon pending date.
- h. Budget/Financials/Payroll: Payroll teleconference with Carrie Klebe - next meeting pending. BMSI software updates pending for new weighted overtime calculation and NHRS reporting was scheduled week of 1/12/20 did not take place. Retirement NHRS upload file format, now reported annually instead of monthly is still pending, retiree reporting due to NHRS by February 15; will result in fine if not submitted.
- i. Out of State Travel: A request was presented for out of state travel for Keith Couture, Dietary Manager April 6 and 7, less than 300 miles round trip. All other expenses are covered through Reinhart, held in VT. The Board authorized travel under the Nursing Hospital Administrator’s report Item 10m.
- j. Meetings/Committee Reports:
 - NHAC Nursing Home Affiliate: Next meeting 2/13/20; Executive Committee 2/14/20
 - AVH Extended Care Meeting: 3/17/20
 - NHAC HR Affiliate: Danielle Rioux, will attend 2/21/20 – DOL Guest Speaker on FMLA
 - NHAC Billing Affiliate: Vicky Nason and Jane Ryan will attend 4/24/20 – Merrimack County

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 bids for the Tax Anticipation Note were opened at the meeting. The bids read as follows:

Mascoma Savings Bank	2.88
Northway Bank	2.05
Passumpsic Savings Bank	2.14

b. 2019 was closed on February 3. This was possible by every department head submitting their invoices promptly. We will have to re-open 2019 to make adjustments per the Delegation votes at the March meeting and audit adjustments. This will probably occur in March or April and is an annual procedure.

c. Vachon Clukay & Company PC were immersed in financials for the 2019 Financial Audit. The audit team was in Coös County all week and will be working with us remotely for the next few weeks.

d. The Director of Finance have been selected for the 2020 Primex³ Emerging Leaders Program, which will begin this spring.

e. In regards to the issue with Bangor Savings Bank and Passumpsic Bank not being in compliance with the NH State Statute **Update:** This change has become a bill, HB 1119, which is currently in the House committee. There was a hearing on February 4th and our Treasurer provided a letter to support the bill. There seems to be good support for this bill, so we are hopeful it will move forward. We are continuing to use Bangor Savings Bank in Colebrook and Passumpsic Bank in Lancaster.

f. NH Government Finance Officers Association: The Finance Director was unable to attend the meeting on February 4 due to the auditors work here in Coös County.

g. Funding to the State of NH for IDN 7: The NH Association of Counties has formulated the Memo of Understanding for the DSRIP Waiver or Building Capacity for Transformation Waiver and the Standardized Reporting sheet. We are waiting for an update on how much and if the other 9 counties will contribute. The NHAC committees will be meeting on February 14.

h. County House Project: Funding/Grant options are being pursued to see if viable for the 2020 Budget. Michele Moren-Grey from North Country Council is helping with grant funding. It appears the maximum grant amount from USDA would be \$30,000. With Michele's advice, we are pre-mature in our process and are not pursuing the December USDA deadline. Michele has pursued other grant options, which there has not been much success for our criteria.

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: 1/01/2020 – 1/31/2020

a. New Hires: 6

Department:	#	Positions
Nursing Home	5 (3 PT, 2 Temp)	RN, LNP, UA, Dietary Aides
County	1 (FT)	Legal Sec/VW

b. Separations: 6

Department:	#	Positions
Nursing Home	5 (2 PT, 3 Temp)	LNA's
Nursing Hospital	1 (PT)	Hskp

c. Change in Status: 4

Department:	#	Positions
Nursing Home	3 (PT)	HIM, LNA
Nursing Hospital	1 (PT)	LNA

d. Reasons for separation/Change of status:

- 2 new employment
- 2 did not meet job requirements
- 2 personal
- 1 retirement
- 3 resignation

e. FMLA/Leave of absences/ADA/WC:

Nursing Home	19
Nursing Hospital	8

f. The open enrollment period for union members closed January 31, 2020. New enrollments forms and new "opt out" forms were required from all union members. These were distributed and received and submitted to HealthTrust.

g. January was a busy month processing required end of the year reports and the orientation of potential new hires.

h. Friday, February 21, 2020, Danielle Rioux and the HR Coordinator will be attending the HR Affiliate meeting in Concord, NH. Steve McKinney from the US Department of Labor will be the guest speaker. Kate Horgan from the Dupont Group will also be in attendance with the latest legislative updates

Commissioner Samson asked he could review some exit interviews. He explained that there have been several resignations over the past year and was interested in the reasons given. Commissioner Brady asked if the documents were part of personnel files. The HR Coordinator replied that the documents were not included in the personnel file but placed in a binder. The forms are reviewed for improvement and placed in a three-ring binder.

Lynn Beede noted that Berlin considers these documents as confidential information and not necessarily shared with department heads. Employees who leave share information that they do not want shared with the supervisor. The employees are assured privacy.

Commissioner Brady asked the County Administrator to contact the attorney for the proper procedure.

13. Commissioners' Committee Reports: There were no committee reports.

14. Other Business:

a. Budget Transfers: The following line item budget transfers were approved by the Board:

Coös County Nursing Hospital:

To: 01-05150-8400 Snow Removal	\$1,785.00	
From: 01-05150-0200 Maint Salaries		\$1,785.00

To: 01-05193-1300 Retirement	1,010.00	
From: 01-05193-1200 Health Insurance		1,010.00

County Attorney:

To: 03-04110-1000 Social Security	1.96	
From: 03-04110-2300 Contracted Services		1.96

To: 03-04110-1000 Retirement	1,130.00	
From: 03-04110-1000 Contracted Services		1,130.00

Department of Corrections:

To: 03-06100-1600 Employee Meals	1,956.00	
From: 03-06100-1200 Health Insurance		1,956.00

To: 03-06100-1300 Retirement	3,889.00	
From: 03-06100-1200 Health Insurance		3,889.00

15. Unincorporated Places:

a. Coös County Treasurer - Delegation of Deposit Authority. The document was signed by the Board.

b. Outstanding Property Taxes Report as of 12/31/2019 was distributed to the Board by Linda Harris, Tax Collector.

Dixville	646.87
Green's Grant	139.00
Millsfield	4,633.27
Odell	133.96
Pinkham's Grant	755.00
Success	851.00
Thompson & Meserve Purchase	5.00
Wentworth Location	3,833.74

- c. The 2020 General Assessing Contract - Commerford Nieder Perkins, LLC was presented to the Board for approval. The amount of the contract was \$4,400 for up to 40 pickups/parcels. The Board signed the contract.
- d. The request for the State Fire Marshall to act as Building Inspector - Cog Railway was approved under the County Administrator's report.

16. A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (a) at 10:18 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 10:20 a.m. All approved 3-0.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to allow the Registrar to adjust the salary of Wanda Kenison by one step. All approved 3-0.

17. Budget Review:

Commissioner Grenier asked that the Sheriff's Department and Department of Corrections reduce their budgets by \$15,000 or a combination of expenses/revenue.

Commissioner Samson noted that he did not plan on supporting the budget. He is against percentage increases. There should be set raises across the board for all employees. Employees in Coös County are the lowest paid but have the greater expense. Job security is important and all employees are important.

The following changes were made:

- Registry of Deeds revenue increased by \$5,000.
- Both nursing homes were directed to remove all computer expenses from their budgets. All IT related expenses will be located in one line item.
- Remove the 53rd payroll funding as it is included in the budget.
- Remove County house renovations. Ms. Fish noted that this change would be budget neutral as the amount will be removed on the revenue side as well.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to recommend to the Delegation to sell the County House. All approved 3-0. The house will need to be reappraised.

Commissioner Grenier stated that the County cannot increase the nursing wages by \$2/hour in one shot as requested by the Nursing Home Administrators. The increases will need to be done in increments. He proposed a \$1/hour increase for RNs/LPNs/MNAs/LNAs and a 1½% COLA across the Board for all non-union employees.

The County Administrator was directed by the Board to contact the County Attorney and ask that he reduce his budget by \$15,000 as well.

The County Administrator will also contact Brendan Prusick at UNH Cooperative Extension for a revised budget to include the part-time employee as a UNH employee.

A special meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 18, 2020 at the Coös County Nursing Hospital Home at 3:00 p.m. to discuss and finalize the proposed budget.

The March meeting will be held March 11, 2020 at the Coös County Nursing Home in Berlin, NH beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Grenier, seconded by Commissioner Samson to adjourn the meeting at 12:17 p.m. All approved 3-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Rick Samson, Clerk