

Sullivan County NH

Type of meeting: Board of Commissioners – Public Meeting Minutes

Date / Time: May 17, 2005, 1:30 PM

Place: Sullivan County Unity Complex - Ahern Building

ATTENDEES: Commissioner Donald Clarke - *Chair*, Ben Nelson – *Vice Chair* (arrived later), Ethel Jarvis - *Clerk*; Ed Gil de Rubio – *County Manager*; Peter Farrand – *Human Resource Director*; Sam Fetcher – *HR Assistant*; Mary Johnson – *Interim Nursing Home Administrator*; Genesis Eldercare Representatives: Ray Thivierge – *Sr. VP of Operations and Network Services*, Patricia “Pat” Scheller – *Regional Marketing Manager NH/VT Region Northeast Area* and Lynda Goldthwaite – *Clinical Services Manager NH/VT Region Northeast Area*; *State-County Delegates* Brenda Ferland, Larry Converse, Stephen Prichard, Harry Gale, Christopher Irish and Beverly Rodeschin; Sharon Johnson-Callum (minute taker) and Kurt Beek – *Claremont City Planning* and Patrick Pinkson-Burk of *RCAP* (latter two arrived later during meeting).

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: James Lowe Argus Champion - Staff Reporter and others.

1:30 The County Manager announced the Commissioners would arrive in approximately 10-15 minutes.

1:49 *Commissioner Jarvis and Clarke arrived.*

1:50 The meeting was brought to order by Commissioner Chair, Donald S. Clarke. All recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1 MEETING MINUTES

The Chair noted they would skip Agenda No. 1, review of minutes, as they were running late.

A special acknowledgement was made to the State-County Delegates in attendance.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2 LNA GRADUATION AWARDS PRESENTATION

The County Manager explained awards would be presented to the recent LNA graduates. He indicated the Nursing Home held the courses a couple times a year, but hoped to embellish on the tradition by holding them quarterly. The Nursing Home Interim Administrator, Mary Johnson, along with the Board of Commissioner Chair, presented a special certificate to the following graduates:

1. Meghan Foster
2. Ashley Gunville
3. Quintin Hess
4. Sue Ann Ingalls
5. Melissa Kennett
6. Joan Leslie (Absent from Presentation)
7. Jessica Sturtevant

Ms. Johnson thanked the graduates for their hard work in helping the residents and Commissioner Clarke made special comments of appreciation.

2:00 *The six graduates left the meeting.*

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 NURSING HOME REPORT

Mary Johnson, Interim Nursing Home Administrator, provided the Nursing Home Report.

- AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.A. CENSUS - 128 beds filled, 123 budgeted Medicaid (Copy on file)
- AGENDA ITEM NO. 3B. STAFFING - The eight additional LNA graduates will enhance the 3-11 and 11-7 staffing issues. Two recent LNA's were hired to work the 4-8 shifts - their responsibility is to keep the dining room open and help residents back to bed. They hired an LPN per diem. Johnson noted they would not be depending on agency use and that they were working on attracting and attaining the best RN's.

Q. Rep. Rodeschin questioned why the Nursing Home was below census.

A. Johnson noted the trend of more elders referred to homecare. Commissioner Clarke noted that the private pays, which showed 19 beds occupied, was above the 13 budgeted. He noted the variance increases revenues. County Manager discussed acute care and revenues up for Nursing Home.

- AGENDA ITEM NO. 3.C RAY THIVIERGE

Introductions were made to Ray Thivierge, Patricia Scheller and Lynda Goldthwaite, all of Genesis Eldercare (see first page, attendees list, for company position titles). The County Manager explained the Board was beginning their review of the Genesis Eldercare contract for the Administrator position, and his invitation extended to all Delegates to participate in the meeting to ask questions. The County Manager will be working with the Board of Commissioners and the County Attorney and will report back to the Delegates on proceedings. Mr. Thivierge discussed his start in health care, as a 16-year-old orderly at the Coos County Nursing Home. Optimizing strengths through private/public partnership in the admin position. He noted they began their contact with the Nursing Home with the efficiency audit. The audit showed problems and solutions. They are now getting to know the mission of the Board of Commissioners and county, and can enhance that with their expertise. Mr. Thivierge cited what Genesis Eldercare could provide for on site expertise: clinical, marketing, human resources, reimbursement services and a "whole pluther" of other things.

2:05 *Commissioner Nelson arrived at meeting.*

Mr. Thivierge briefed them on their search for a permanent Administrator. He discussed the historical workings of long care facilities. Census shows private long-term pay population is dwindling. Committed to clinical excellence and to grow clinical competence. Discussed Medicare services. They have the opportunity to attract the nurses that want to be more involved in clinical care. He noted the residents and families expect excellent care and ask "Was the room appropriate?" "Was the food hot?" "Were they well greeted at the door?", etc. He noted its customer satisfaction that sends those back into the community to place the facilities name in a positive light. Thivierge

discussed the lack of nurses, or trainers for nursing staff, as a challenge. He noted the need to be good to their staff. He indicated they have a commitment to staff they hope everyone will come to see and expect. No reason to not operate with a positive variance and add to county's coffers. Commissioner Clarke noted no one should assume the idea the County was not going to be there anymore as a safety net for residents. Thivierge noted that the Genesis Eldercare owned facilities operated with 75-80% medicaid occupied. He noted Sullivan County has open beds and was not turning anyone away.

The meeting was opened to Delegates for questions.

- Q. Representative Ferland asked where Thivierge foresees the small nursing homes going with costs increasing vs. reimbursement.
- A. Thivierge agreed the pressure was there for smaller nursing homes to cut staff, supplies or care.
- Q. Representative Converse asked why Thivierge referred to residents as "customers" when they are residents. He did not think it appropriate. Representative Prichard also commented on this issue, indicating if he does not use "residents", then to use the word "clients", and that they needed to be more careful with words they use. He made reference to a report Genesis Eldercare provided earlier to Commissioners, which included inappropriate wording.
- A. Thivierge assured them he would try to be more careful with wordage.
- Q. County Manager noted the Nursing Home FY '06 budget was aggressive, and asked Thivierge if he felt the proposed budget was doable?
- A. Thivierge indicated yes. He asked for Ms. Scheller to provide information. Ms. Scheller began her career in Dover in 1989. When first seeing the Sullivan County Nursing Home she was impressed by how well kept and attractive it was. She indicated the staff she met showed they cared and that they must place funds into the budget in order to attract the right people. Approved hiring external care coordinator to catch patients, build relationships, talk to families, nurses and physicians. She noted the quality of care at the Sullivan County Nursing Home was no secrete and that the marketing avenue was just being realized.
- Q. Representative Rodeschin asked for the location of other Genesis run facilities.
- A. Mr. Thivierge provided names.
- Q. Representative Rodeschin asked what type of relationship he felt Genesis Eldercare had with NH State Health and Human Services.
- A. Mr. Thivierge felt it was good and they work closely with the State. He noted they might not be perfect, but quick to respond and report any incidents.
- Q. Representative Rodeschin asked if staff cutting were regulated.
- A. Mr. Thivierge confirmed that most nursing homes operate well above the standard and

operate based on the homes acuity level.

Q. Representative Rodeschin asked how involved Genesis Eldercare would be in the proposed assisted care living facility.

A. Mr. Thivierge noted they have not been asked to be involved in that issue. He noted it was a wise move by the County to create an assisted care facility and that Genesis has two successful ones in NH, which are attracting a lot of residents. Rep. Rodeschin noted that she would like the Board to consider those with disabilities, if they consider assisted care.

Q. Representative Gale asked if the issue the resident's daughter broached to the Delegates at the previous Delegation meeting was taken care of.

A. Mr. Thivierge noted with change resistance will be experienced. He discussed the policy of using quilted cloth pads which was changed to using special briefs, and that the policy change was not well received by the staff. Ms. Johnson talked about the meeting held with the nurse managers when she arrived and that it was discovered the briefs were not fitted properly, causing leakage and extra clean up. On the 3-11 and 11-7 shifts the cloth pads were put back in to usage until the Kendall representatives arrived to demonstrate how to use the equipment properly. Ms. Johnson discussed the closing down of the dining room on a certain day, and the policy they have since put in to place. Ms. Johnson discussed additional staff added to Stearns III to help with a higher acuity level. The County Manager noted he was unaware of the resident's daughter showing up for the Delegation meeting with concerns until they appeared. He noted it would have been appropriate to advise him in order to have Ms. Johnson attend the meeting to address the concerns. Ms. Johnson noted, they need to get back to basics; "we need to strive for resident centered care". She noted that is what she is all about and that's what she expects the "hard working" employees at the Nursing Home to be about. Thivierge noted they need to expect with change comes resistant and with resistance people will complain. What they want to do is to create an opportunity to allow them to voice those complaints and with Ms. Johnson's open door policy, that is one step to deal productively with the concerns. He noted the person who complains just wants to be heard and to be satisfied with the results. He assured them they would hear the person and take constructive action.

Comment: Commissioner Nelson noted the County contracts for just one position, the Administrator, with Genesis and noted it was a perc Genesis has a team to draw expertise from. However, it does not mean the Commissioners will agree with everything Genesis recommends and he cited one recommendation example, change of usage in MacConnell Unit, which was not followed through on.

Comment: Representative Converse noted the people that work at the Nursing Home have paid for that through their property taxes so expect it to be there, as their home, when they need to use it. Mr. Thivierge noted Genesis Eldercare wants it to stay that way. He also pointed out the Nursing Home has been a high expense to the tax payers of the county and they have the opportunity to do something through their partnership to ensure the nursing home stays the way the citizens want it. He indicated it's their

intension to grow and move with the County in a conscientious way.

- Q. Representative Prichard asked Thivierge what he foresaw as a long-range vision of the partnership.
- A. Mr. Thivierge noted they want to create something, see a future with county homes with the history they have played in the communities. Discussed efficiency survey to compare Sullivan to other homes. He noted it is up to management: Commissioners, the County Manager and Delegates to decide the role of Genesis Eldercare in that future. Commissioner Clarke noted they will be discussing this process extensively for the next few months and was the reason the Delegates were invited today. Commissioner Nelson added, though he is unsure if the partnership will be successful, they need to try it out.
- Q. Commissioner Jarvis asked if they were expecting to make a profit? "Are you using us as proto type for other NH county nursing homes in state?" She noted she was not in favor of any type of public/private commitment with the cost at \$233,000.
- A. The County Manager noted the cost was \$200,000 - budget for management. Mr. Thivierge noted Genesis is looking for compensation on services to be provided and there is an opportunity for value added. He indicated, you need to ask, "Can you do this yourself?" Or, are you willing to pay someone to help. He noted Genesis Eldercare has the expertise, which has been built over time; they bring bed strength and security and expect payment for that service. He added, "*Are you doing all you can to get to your vision?*" He noted, to the extent there is a value with their partnership and that they talk publicly about the success of that and that the Board of Commissioners talks about it, that would be rewarding. He noted Genesis Eldercare was not there to loose money or give away services and that the Nursing field was not a high profit growth type field.

Comment: Representative Irish noted he's been hearing "good stuff". He indicated he supports private/public partnerships and thinking out of the box. He noted if the public part were working, Genesis would not be here. He noted "we are competing with the private sector" and feel it's changed a lot since Genesis arrived. He indicated we have a responsibility to help the citizens with their complaints, and should not do sneak attacks but refer the person complaining to the Commissioners, County Manager or Nursing Home Administrator. He indicated it's their responsibility to be honest with the citizens, and hopes Sullivan County can be a proto type for other areas as that says Sullivan County was successful.

Comment: Representative Rodeschin noted that this all started when the County ran in a deficit mode for two years in a row; and that contracting to Genesis for the efficiency audit was the Delegations recommendation. She agreed they must make changes and think out of the box. County Manager concurred the relationship with Genesis began with the direction from the Delegation. Commissioner Clarke noted it began with the study committee, which was Chaired by Mr. [Henry] Rodeschin. Representative Ferland noted that Rodeschin was being mild in the years the county ran a deficit, interjecting it was more like a five year run. She added, she'd like the County to focus on "break even", not striving for profit.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

The new Nursing Home Administrator, Courtney Marshall, will begin work June 6th.

Peter Farrand, Human Recourse Director / Notary entered meeting.

It was decided by Chair to go out order to accommodate other guests on agenda.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6. COMMISSIONERS REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.B. CDFA GRANT APPLICATION EXTENSION – PLEASANT VALLEY ESTATES
Kurt Beek, Project Manager for Claremont City Planning, introduced himself. The history of the project was noted: a joint partnership was created between the Pleasant Valley Estates owner/residents, Claremont City, the banks, and Sullivan County in order to attain CDBG funds to improve upon the sewer lines. They are now requesting an extension to the CDFA application, as the length of time to attain the engineer and to gather the necessary documents ran beyond the deadline. The engineers have completed 90% of the drawings. Commissioner Clarke asked if extension took away from committed money? Mr. Beek indicated no.

3:45 A motion was made by Commissioner Jarvis to allow the Chair to sign forms for the extension. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken. The motion carried with all in favor.

The forms were signed and dated, then notarized by Peter Farrand. Mr. Beek will send the Commissioners Office a copy of the signed forms (copy on file)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6.C. RECAP SOLUTION INC – EPA GRANT LETTER OF SUPPORT

Mr. Patrick Pinkson-Burke briefed Commissioners on the EPA grant proposal. Commissioner Clarke read through the letter of support, out loud (Copy on file).

Representative Irish questioned why the Board of Commissioners needed to support the grant proposal. He noted Claremont was working at a local level on waste issues and this grant would take away local funding. Rep. Irish feels there is no data to back the litigation mentioned in the letter concerning “waste is being mismanaged” or that pollution in area was caused by the “current method of waste disposal”.

Pinkson-Burke noted:

1. He is part of Sullivan County: works, lives and participates in the local committees,
2. That Sullivan County Solid Waste Committee had participated in other grants, and
3. He never indicated he was an opponent of the Wheelabrator incinerator facility.
4. Their group wants to find the most environmentally sound way to process waste and create a simple comprehensive plan to reduce pollution. He noted 90% of the pollution comes from outside sources and their mission is to find local solutions, as a united group

of communities.

Rep. Irish noted to get to the local people the local people must use the elected officials. Rep. Irish asked the Board if they felt there had been improper management of waste in the County. Commissioner Clarke indicated no. Commissioner Jarvis indicated she was in favor of the committee seeking the grant to investigate other routes of recycling and waste disposal.

The Board discussed the letter. It was noted they would remove the words "caused by the improper handling and disposal of solid waste" and "caused by the current methods of waste disposal".

3:54 A motion was made by Commissioner Jarvis to approve the letter of support from the Board of Commissioners, with Commissioner Chair signing, for the \$90,000 grant. Commissioner Nelson seconded the motion. Discussion: it was noted the Commissioner Chair could sign the letter, after the two phrases were removed. A voice vote was taken. The motion carried with all in favor.

3:55 Mr. Pinkson-Burke left the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4. FACILITIES REPORT

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.A. COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY AUDIT REPORT

Greg Chanis, Facilities & Operations Director distributed copies of the Energy & Resource Solutions Executive Summary (copy on file) reflecting data from an energy audit performed. The survey was performed on the Unity property buildings and was paid for by PSNH. The auditing company provided two surveyors who created a comprehensive / unbiased survey. The group discussed the auditors cost savings findings and recommendations. It was noted the FY 06 budget included \$35,000 for an energy retro fit and Chanis found the cost would come close. He noted if they can get rebates, they could do the light retrofit, also. One of the auditor's recommendations is to reset the well pump timing: one pump runs 24 hrs day and other as needed. The recommendation is to run the pumps at night only. The County stores 250,000 gallons of water at a time. It was noted the valve on Sugar River Drive is no longer paid by County and was transferred over Claremont two weeks ago, per agreement.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.B. FACILITIES REPORT BUILDING ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Mr. Chanis briefed attendees on the feasibility study grant and structural assessment CHA was performing on most of the County owned Unity buildings. He noted the CHA team worked two days, going through the buildings and taking pictures. They are evaluating the building's soundness and potential use, and if they are no longer usable: if, when and how they should be demolished. Chanis explained he requested CHA to separate the two items they are performing and to give him the building assessment study prior to other if it is done in time. The County is expecting the CHA (Clough Harbor Associates) architectural report next week.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4.C. S.C. LAND MANAGEMENT USE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Chanis indicated the first meeting of the Sullivan County Land Management Use Committee was held last week. The committee discussed the 1,500 which encompasses five parcels the county owns and the process to make recommendations. The committee's next meeting will be May 27th, Newport 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Chanis invited the Board to view the new truck purchased. The truck includes a sander and plow.

SURPLUS VEHICLES

Mr. Chanis distributed colored copies of three vehicles: a 1949 La France Fire Truck-Water Tanker, a donated van and an older truck, which the Facilities Department had used. It was noted the value of the Fire Truck could run from \$5,000 to \$10,000. He's seeking the Board's permission to investigate different disposal methods.

4:14 A motion was made by Commissioner Nelson to empower Greg Chanis to look at ways to liquidate the vehicles. Commissioner Jarvis seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. A voice vote was taken and the motion carried with all in favor.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Q. James Lowe asked if the County feasibility study included Representative Gale's previously mentioned drug rehabilitation center.

A. The County Manager indicated Representative Gale's idea was not part of the study.

AGENDA ITEM ON. 5 MS42 FORM

County Manager thanked the Executive Finance Committee members and the EFC Chair for their expertise throughout the FY 06 budget review. Representative Ferland noted the EFC members were open minded, tentative, and commended the new Delegates for a job well done on a very tedious process.

4:20 Commissioner Clarke and Commissioner Jarvis signed and dated the MS42 form as Chair and Clerk respectively.

County Manager noted the Public Hearing would take place June 16th 7 pm in Newport at the Lou Thompson Room, Sugar River Technical Center.

AGENDA ITEM ON. 6. COMMISSIONERS REPORT

NH STATE / COUNTY ISSUE: NOT ON AGENDA

Commissioner Clarke discussed a 20% cost of care dispute between the State and the 10 NH counties; and the 60 million cap. NH State HHS indicated in '04 the cap was exceeded and that

Sullivan County's share was approximately \$106,000. He discussed the Commissioner's Council meeting held this morning. The attorney who attended recommended the Council approve, initially, declaratory judgment proceedings; as this action would be less aggressive than an injunctive relief. Clarke noted it was recommended each County Board do a formal motion to accept this action.

4:25 A motion was made by Commissioner Nelson to do two things:

- 1. To approve Sullivan County joining the NHAC of counties to initiate declaratory judgment proceedings in regards to skilled nursing and calculation of cap payments, and**
- 2. to authorize the NHAC to act as agent on behalf of the counties in declaratory proceedings.**

Commissioner Jarvis seconded the motion. Discussion commenced regarding the law firm attained: Devine and Millimet, Bob Dunn attorney. Attorney's fees: the 10 counties will be charged \$41,000 - the NHAC has \$21,000 for legal consulting. The Commissioners Council decided the 1st \$20,000 would be pro rata based on medicaid bed day basis, the next \$20,000 will come out of NHAC legal counseling line and any cost in excess will revert back to the 1st way of pro rating. The County Manager pointed out that the \$160,000 for cap was encumbered. Rep. Rodeschin of Commissioners questions she could present to Shumway. General discussion commenced on that issue. County Manager noted this was a Human Services issue, not the Nursing Home. It was noted this was another tactic of NH State to cost shift to property tax payers. **A voice vote was taken. The motion carried with all in favor.**

4:31 Representative Rodeschin left the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6. A. DR. CARL STEARNS PLACQUE DRAFT

Commissioners reviewed draft wording of plaque honoring Dr. Carl Stearns. They would like to include a picture with plaque. They anticipate holding plaque presentation at the Pancake Breakfast June 12th. It was noted Dr. Carl Stearn's book [*The Early History of Medicine in Sullivan County NH*, published in 1974] could be viewed at the Commissioners Office.

4:33 A motion was made by Commissioner Nelson to approve the draft wording.

Commissioner Jarvis seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken. The motion carried unanimously.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 12th - Pancake Breakfast at the Nursing Home in Unity. Event will include: tours by County Forester Chuck Hersey, a 4-H fashion show, and homeland security equipment display - provided through the Sheriff's Office.

SIDE NOTE: COUNTY LAND ISSUE

Commissioner Clarke indicated Armand Johnson was interested in taking the treetops left on County property. The Board informally approved the action.

4:36 *Representative Irish left the meeting.*

UPCOMING EVENTS CONTINUED ...

- May 26th, Sunapee - *Secession Solution Seminar* Thurs May 26th in Sunapee at the High School Music Room – So noted by Rep. Ferland.
- May 26th – Solid Waste Committee meeting – So noted by Rep. Ferland.

4:41 A motion was made by Commissioner Nelson to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Jarvis seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A voice vote was taken and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



*Ethel Jarvis, Clerk
Board of Commissioners*

EJ/s.j-c.