

Carroll County Board of Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
April 2 2024

Members Present: Chairman Terry McCarthy, Vice-Chairman Chuck McGee, Clerk Bill Nelson
Others Present: Executive Coordinator Mellisa Seamans, DPW Director Will DeWitte, CCHOC Superintendent Sean Eldridge, Treasurer Joe Costello (remote), Josh Brustin of MWV Housing Coalition, Rep. Mark McConkey, Rep. David Paige, Rep. Richard Brown
Public Present: Fred Cain, Ed Comeau (governmentoversite.com), Dallas Emery, Kevin Houle

Pledge of Allegiance
Call to Order

Public Comment

Mr. Cain: Article in today's Conway Daily Sun that the Conway Selectmen have agreed to have the NH State prisoners refurbished and create cushions for their antique wood benches at \$88 apiece. Perhaps the County might have the meeting room benches redone
Been reviewing the DPW Director's text messages received through K Houle's 91-A request. Was Chmn. McCarthy aware former Comm'r Plache was not paying for his hay as he was receiving it? (Chmn. McCarthy answered she was not aware). Clear in the messages that Mr. Houle had a target on his back and not allowed to buy hay. Request electronic copy of the text messages

Mr. Houle: Read aloud one of the hay text message exchanges. How do I get to be a special customer? If the County had just sold me five bales I would not keep showing up here.

Mr. Emery: Apologized if he was rude to the nursing home administrator last week. Asked the commissioners to look at the policy about no cash at the nursing home cafe

Recess for Hale's Location Board of Selectmen meeting
Reconvene

Approval of Meeting Minutes

MOTION: To approve meeting minutes of March 28 2024 by Comm'r McGee, 2nd Comm'r Nelson.
Passed 3-0

Manifest Approval

MOTION: To approve the manifest totals as read:
Apr 2 2024 Accounts Payable 915,463.43
by Comm'r Nelson, 2nd Comm'r McGee. Passed 3-0

Bid Recommendation – Water Meter Installation

Dir. DeWitte recommends awarding the bid to Backflow Pro. Have previous experience with this company, lowest bidder. The nursing home installation will occur after hours.

MOTION: Award to Backflow Pro in the amount of \$38,454 and authorize Will DeWitte to sign the contract by Comm'r McGee, 2nd Comm'r Nelson. Passed 3-0

Bicycle Recycle Program

Supt. Eldridge requests permission to use the front parking lot of the Annex on May 4, 10am-1pm for a used bicycle collection event.

MOTION: To approve bicycle collection event May 4, 2024 by Comm'r McGee, 2nd Comm'r Nelson. Passed 3-0

Housing Charrette – Reps. McConkey, Paige, Brown and Josh Brustin of MWV Housing Coalition

Lengthy discussion ensued. The following does not represent the full conversation but merely a general overview

Rep Paige: The Lands Committee discussed and voted to support the idea of hosting a housing charrette with the condition that any prime agricultural soil be excluded from the areas of consideration. A charrette is not a project proposal. It is a visioning process, an imagining what could happen on the land and what the barriers are. I support it because if we ever want to do a project it gives us a baseline. There is no commitment. It helps us get more information. Opportunity to begin a process of public input.

Rep McConkey and Rep Brown agreed with Rep Paige's comments.

Rep Brown The idea is to make sure the commissioners are in agreement with us. The charrette is to look at what are the appropriate uses for the County land. What is feasible and what is reasonable?

J Brustin A charrette gives us an opportunity to reach out to all towns in the County, all have been impacted by lack of affordable housing. We form a steering committee, look at three parcels in Ossipee and choose one in April. In May we start getting stakeholders together – architect, banker, engineer, realtors, people who help write zoning. We will have a public meeting for the community to let us know what they'd like to see happen with the property, what they want and don't want. This may include more than one location in the County. Walk of the property followed by one-day work session to try to get the best use of the property and then create a design considering ideas, zoning, costing, gives an overview. Developers have to be able to make money so this is an exercise based on reality. For so many reasons the County property is the ideal location to do this.

Rep Paige The kind of questions we've been talking about in circles in the committee for a year are the questions we can get answers to through the charrette process. This is a research process with the right experts

The charrette process is at no cost to the County.

Rep McConkey Our emphasis with the committee is would housing, childcare help us recruit and retain County employees

Comm'r McGee The land is owned by the taxpayers of Carroll County. If you sell for anything less than market value or give it away, you are subsidizing the project. Who will manage it? Who will

live there? Before we spend too much more time the Commissioners need to decide whether or not we want to dispose of some land.

Rep McConkey Every time the County has built something, the courthouse, the nursing home, we've always built it on the prime land. We want to preserve the prime land we have

Chmn. McCarthy A charrette is not an obligation, it is a fact-finding process

Rep Brown We are trying to address needs of the County and to get guidance from the Commissioners on how to proceed

J Brustin The median house price in Conway now is \$479,000 with median income of \$59,000. The door to affordable housing is closed right now for service workers, teachers, doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses so we are going to start seeing population decline. The County land is an opportunity to see what is viable. The solution is a complicated one to create housing desperately needed to have healthy communities.

MOTION: To move forward with the charrette process by Comm'r Nelson, 2nd Comm'r McGee. Passed 3-0

Chmn. McCarthy Concerned about daycare and housing for families on the County property given proximity of jail, courthouse and sheriff's department
Agreement that the County should not be managing the housing or the childcare.

Rep McConkey Town of Ossipee has retooled their zoning ordinance to be just what is needed to increase housing. They have reworked their cluster zoning, number of units per parcel. We are in the right town to do this. They have all of the building blocks in place.

Technical Assistance Grant – Childcare Feasibility Study and Needs Assessment

Rep Paige: CDFA has \$25,000 planning grants to fund a feasibility study and needs assessment. We know the need is acute. The childcare shortage is at the heart of our workforce shortage. Feasibility study will help determine if it's worth moving forward. We would hire a contractor to do the study. We envision a county-owned facility that is leased to a provider with the building being constructed with non-County funds.

Comm'r McGee Private daycare centers are going out of business, why is that
Rep Paige It's a hard business. It's a broken market. There are several providers interested who can make it work. One provider that is succeeding is a franchise model. Another, Children Unlimited, offers a mix childcare and clinical services. They bill Medicaid so have the diversified revenue streams. Many centers are closing with the old models but there are other businesses that work that can scale. There is an opportunity if we provide the space and have the right provider. There are many grants and private philanthropy opportunities for childcare

MOTION To apply for the \$25,000 CDFA grant to hire a contractor to conduct a childcare feasibility study and needs assessment by Comm'r Nelson, 2nd Comm'r McGee. Passed 3-0

Sewer System Study Grant

Rep McConkey We approached NH Department of Environmental Service Waste Division and discussed grants. There are state and federal funds available to have a study of the condition, capacity and future needs of the complex sewer system. Grant applications are due at the end of May.

No decision made.

Annex Project

Chmn. McCarthy I spoke to Siemens on Monday and they are hoping to have updated figures for us very soon. Because of Bonnie's magic we are now only short \$1 million instead of \$3 million needed to do the whole building

Rep McConkey We heard the Commissioners are thinking to start at the front of the building and work your way back. The Lands Committee sees the opposite with the kitchen and the function spaces as a priority then progress to the rest of the building. The Delegation Chairman questions if the project should end at some point in the building and move some funding to add assisted living and office space to the nursing home instead of investing it all in this old building

Comm'r McGee It makes most sense to me to do the kitchen and community space but I question who will use the kitchen

Non-Public Session

None

Meeting adjourned.

Date Approved: _____

Terry McCarthy
Chairman

Chuck McGee
Vice-Chairman

Bill Nelson
Clerk