

STRAFFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES – draft

THURSDAY, AUGUST 27, 2026

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88076078990?pwd=XhfZv74QrC78qR5pDjpARV2GadmFIV.1>

Meeting ID: 880 7607 8990 Passcode: 391058

A public meeting of the Strafford County Commissioners was held Thursday, August 27, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, Justice and Administrator Bower Building, 259 County Farm Road, Suite 204, Dover, New Hampshire. It was noted that meeting notices and agendas had been sent to all interested parties, as well as posted on the County Website. Present were Commissioners Maglaras, Feliciano, and Leavitt. Also present were Administrator Raymond Bower, Shannon McEwen, Admissions Coordinator, Kristi Hughes, Director of Social Services, Trish Sprague, Nursing Services Coordinator, Chris Hamilton, Riverside's Director of Infection Control, IT Specialist Kelly Parker, Susan Rice, and Executive Assistant/Deputy Treasurer Janet Hilber. Karen Dandurant and Michael Miller joined via Zoom.

1. Approve Minutes of August 20, 2026: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to approve the minutes of August 20, 2026 as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Feliciano, and approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.
2. Meet with Riverside Rest Home Department Heads: Kristi Hughes, Director of Social Services, discussed Riverside's four resident units and the specialized care provided on each. Unit 5 is a secure dementia unit, while Units 4 and 2 provide general care and Unit 1 serves residents with behavioral needs. Social workers assist residents and families throughout the admission and care process and provide support with psychiatric care, medications, family matters, guardianships, and other personal needs. She noted that Riverside currently serves approximately 175 residents, compared with approximately 215 before Unit 3 closed. Each social worker may be responsible for more than 40 residents, and social workers also assist one another with complex cases and family situations.

Shannon McEwen, Admissions Coordinator, explained that she works with the social workers to assess prospective residents and determine the most appropriate placement. She reviews medical records, evaluates safety concerns, meets with residents and families, and considers roommate compatibility and other placement issues. Commissioners noted that her nursing and supervisory experience has strengthened the admissions process.

Trish Sprague, Nursing Services Coordinator, reported that she has worked at Riverside for approximately 24 years. She supports nursing administration with auditing, monitoring, infection control, and other nursing responsibilities. Sprague has also become certified as an infection preventionist, providing Riverside with qualified backup coverage for its primary infection-control director.

Chris Hamilton, Riverside's Director of Infection Control, discussed his approximately 24 years of service and his progression through several nursing positions. He oversees infection-control policies and procedures, vaccination efforts, outbreak management, and regulatory compliance. Riverside maintains an extensive vaccination program, including required vaccines as well as additional vaccines such as Shingrix and RSV, and staff are preparing for the upcoming flu season.

The Commissioners praised the Riverside team for its work protecting residents from infectious diseases, particularly during and following the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff explained that residents with symptoms are tested promptly to allow the facility to manage illnesses whenever possible and avoid unnecessary hospitalizations. The Commissioners recognized the staff's dedication and professionalism and credited their work as an important part of Riverside's recently achieved five-star rating.

The Commissioners recognized the longevity of Riverside's employees, noting that several department heads have served for more than 20 years. They expressed appreciation for the team's dedication, teamwork, and commitment to residents, particularly while working in an aging facility with ongoing physical challenges. The Commissioners also discussed the importance of accurate medical documentation and regulatory compliance. Administrator Bower reviews physician notes and other records to ensure that care is properly documented, noting that regulators may consider care undocumented if it is not recorded appropriately. The Commissioners also recognized the continued service of Riverside's longtime medical director, Dr. Clary.

3. **Affordable Housing Update:** The Commissioners provided an update on the proposed affordable housing project on County property. The preliminary concept has evolved from the original informal site drawing as additional consideration has been given to parking requirements and other site-plan needs. Warrenstreet Architects and Hutter Construction have assisted with preliminary work, including utilizing existing soil, wetlands, and other site information that had previously been developed for the nursing home project. The latest concept includes three buildings, and Hutter Construction was asked to provide a preliminary construction estimate based on its experience with similar projects. The initial estimate was approximately \$45 million in total construction and infrastructure costs, including parking and related site work. Commissioners emphasized that this figure is only a preliminary estimate and not a final project cost.

The Commissioners discussed the need to develop a formal Request for Qualifications (RFQ) before proceeding with a developer or nonprofit partner. Although Commissioner Feliciano had previously suggested issuing an RFQ, the County has not yet developed the document. The Commissioners proposed contacting the New Hampshire Association of Counties and other organizations to obtain examples of RFQs used for similar affordable-housing projects. The Commissioners also discussed potential assistance from Strafford Regional Planning and organizations experienced in grant writing and affordable housing development. New Hampshire Housing Finance was identified as a potential source of competitive financing for a project of this nature.

The Commissioners noted several factors that could strengthen the project's competitiveness for grants and other financing, including the availability of County-owned land at no acquisition cost, the potential absence of property taxes, and the availability of existing city water and sewer infrastructure. The Commissioners indicated that the proposed project could help address the shortage of affordable housing and provide additional housing capacity for working individuals and families. The discussion also included the possibility of incorporating a volunteer component into an eventual housing arrangement, with residents potentially volunteering a set number of hours each month at County facilities such as the nursing home, daycare, Humane Society, or jail. This concept was raised for consideration and was not adopted as a requirement.

The Commissioners discussed the broader need for affordable housing, particularly for older adults and individuals living on limited incomes. A recent example was shared involving a 74-year-old woman who had been evicted and was living in her vehicle while receiving approximately \$1,100 per month in Social Security. The Commissioners noted that long waiting lists for housing assistance can leave vulnerable residents without realistic options. They emphasized that some individuals experiencing housing insecurity may be reluctant or embarrassed to seek assistance and therefore may constitute a largely hidden population. The Commissioners expressed their continued commitment to pursuing the affordable housing project as one way to increase housing opportunities and address the growing gap between rents and the incomes of working and elderly residents.

The Commissioners also clarified public misconceptions concerning the proposed housing development. It was stated that the project is intended as workforce and affordable housing and is not a program designed specifically to house individuals leaving the warming center or to provide housing for people engaged in drug use. The Commissioners explained that the County already operates a transitional housing program for individuals leaving the correctional system and that such services can reduce the financial burden on local communities by helping formerly incarcerated individuals establish stable housing and employment rather than requiring local welfare assistance. The proposed housing project would be operated by a nonprofit or other non-public-sector organization rather than directly by the County, and the Commissioners reiterated that the project is not expected to involve County property tax funding.

The Commissioners reviewed a video rendering and updated site plan showing what the proposed development could potentially look like when completed. The concept includes housing on County property near the jail and was described as potentially improving the appearance of the County complex while screening the jail from County Farm Road. The Commissioners emphasized that the proposal remains a work in progress and that no final development agreement or operating arrangement has been established. The concept, site plan, and video will be shared on the Strafford County website for access to the public and members of the County Delegation as part of the Commission's commitment to an open development process and transparency. It was also acknowledged that sharing a project during its early stages may result in questions that cannot yet be answered because many details remain under development.

4. Upcoming Events: Chairman Maglaras asked if there were any upcoming events to discuss. The following events were discussed:

- a. Public Hearing on CDBG Grant for St. Anselm College, Thursday, September 24, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.
- b. Executive Committee Second Quarter Report Meeting, Friday, September 25, 2026 at 9:00 a.m.

5. Old and New Business: Chairman Maglaras asked if there was any old or new business to discuss. Chairman Maglaras received an update just prior to this meeting that Easterseals' board had reversed its previous decision to discontinue its adult day-care program in Manchester and Rochester. The program is expected to continue for the time being. Easterseals is also working with the State to identify other providers for homemaker services, with a potential transition by June of the following year. The Commissioners discussed the potential budget impact of continued Easterseals services and whether increased County support could ultimately reduce costs by helping residents remain in the community and avoid nursing-home placement. The issue will be monitored and considered during the upcoming budget process as additional information becomes available.

The Commissioners received a brief update on construction of the warming center. The project remains on schedule and Commissioner Leavitt noted during a site visit that morning, the deck was nearing completion and the exterior walls were expected to begin going up next. Commissioners expressed satisfaction with the progress of the project and noted that construction is visibly advancing.

Chairman Maglaras was informed that Siemens has begun moving forward with the previously discussed energy audit. No results were available at the meeting. The findings will be placed on a future public agenda once received.

The Commissioners discussed a substantial Right-to-Know Law request received through the County email. Administrator Bower explained that the request consists of approximately eight pages of questions and document requests and will require significant research and review to ensure that each request is properly addressed, including requests for which responsive information may not exist. Because of existing responsibilities involving the County Administrator, including the nursing home, and community corrections, he requested authorization to obtain temporary assistance in completing the response. A potential master's-level public administration student from the University of New Hampshire was identified as someone who may be interested in assisting with the project. The Commissioners expressed support for obtaining assistance, recognizing that completing the extensive request would consume significant staff time that could otherwise be devoted to other County responsibilities. Administrator Bower indicated that additional details regarding the proposed assistance and cost would be brought back to the Commissioners.

6. Questions and Comments from the Public Related to this Agenda: Chairman Maglaras asked if there were any questions from the members of the public or other. During public comment, Karen Dandurant of Foster's requested a copy of the video and updated site plan for the proposed affordable housing project. The Commission agreed to provide the requested materials. The Chair also asked that any future reporting make clear that the preliminary architectural and site-planning work provided to the County was donated and that the approximately \$45 million construction figure is only an initial estimate, not a committed or finalized project cost. Ms. Dandurant acknowledged that the \$45 million figure would be characterized as an estimate in any reporting.

Ms. Dandurant also asked for an update regarding Hyder House. The Commission reported that the project continues to be delayed primarily by an information-technology issue, although the parties remain interested in moving forward. An internal deadline of August 30 was established for resolving the outstanding issue, after which a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is expected to be provided to the County. The MOU is anticipated to address, among other matters, the length of the proposed arrangement, particularly because the provider may be making a significant investment and could seek a multi-year commitment. The Commissioners indicated that they would review the proposed term once the MOU is received.

Mrs. Rice thanked the Commission for its transparency and asked for confirmation regarding the reversal of Easterseals' decision to discontinue services. Chairman Maglaras clarified that the information was based on a direct phone call with Easterseals and that the organization had reported that its board had reversed the decision. Mrs. Rice emphasized the importance of adult day-care and respite services for families who are working while caring for elderly relatives or other individuals who require assistance. The Commission agreed that such services are important to families and noted that the County has provided respite services for many years.

The discussion expanded to the increasing demand for nursing-home care and the challenges faced by older residents and their families. Commissioners noted that Riverside has a lengthy waiting list, although only a portion of those waiting are considered to have an immediate or critical need. The Commissioners observed that many families are increasingly concerned about planning for future care because they fear that nursing-home space may not be available when it is needed. The discussion also referenced national projections concerning the anticipated increase in dementia cases and the resulting need for long-term care resources.

The Commissioners expressed strong concern about the financial pressures facing elderly residents, including rising housing costs and limited Social Security income. A recent tragic incident involving an elderly New Hampshire couple was discussed as an example of the extreme consequences that can result when older adults feel they have no viable options. The Commissioners emphasized that affordable housing, access to supportive services, and adequate care resources are essential to ensuring that older residents can remain safe and secure. The discussion reinforced the Commission's stated commitment to advancing the affordable housing proposal and addressing long housing-authority waiting lists.

Mrs. Rice shared a personal example from her childhood in which her grandparents assisted local residents experiencing hardship through food, financial assistance, and other informal community support. She noted that although regulations and social conditions have changed, the principle of neighbors helping neighbors remains important. The Commissioners agreed that the County and its partners should continue looking for ways to assist residents facing difficult circumstances and emphasized the importance of maintaining a commitment to public service and helping people in need.

7. Non-Public Session for the Purpose of Discussing Personnel Issue(s) and Contract Negotiations Pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II: Commissioner Feliciano motioned to go into non-public session at 10:24 a.m. for the purpose of discussing a personnel issue(s) and contract negotiations pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II. Commissioner Leavitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
8. Return to Public Session: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to return to public session at 11:14 a.m. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.
9. Motion to Seal Non-Public Session Minutes: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.
10. Adjournment: The Commissioners signed paperwork as appropriate. Commissioner Leavitt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

George Maglaras, Chairman

Leslie A. Feliciano, Vice Chair

Sean M. Leavitt, Clerk

one eight inch = one foot

one quarter inch = one foot

three quarter inch = one foot

one inch = one foot

one and one half inches = one foot

three inches = one foot

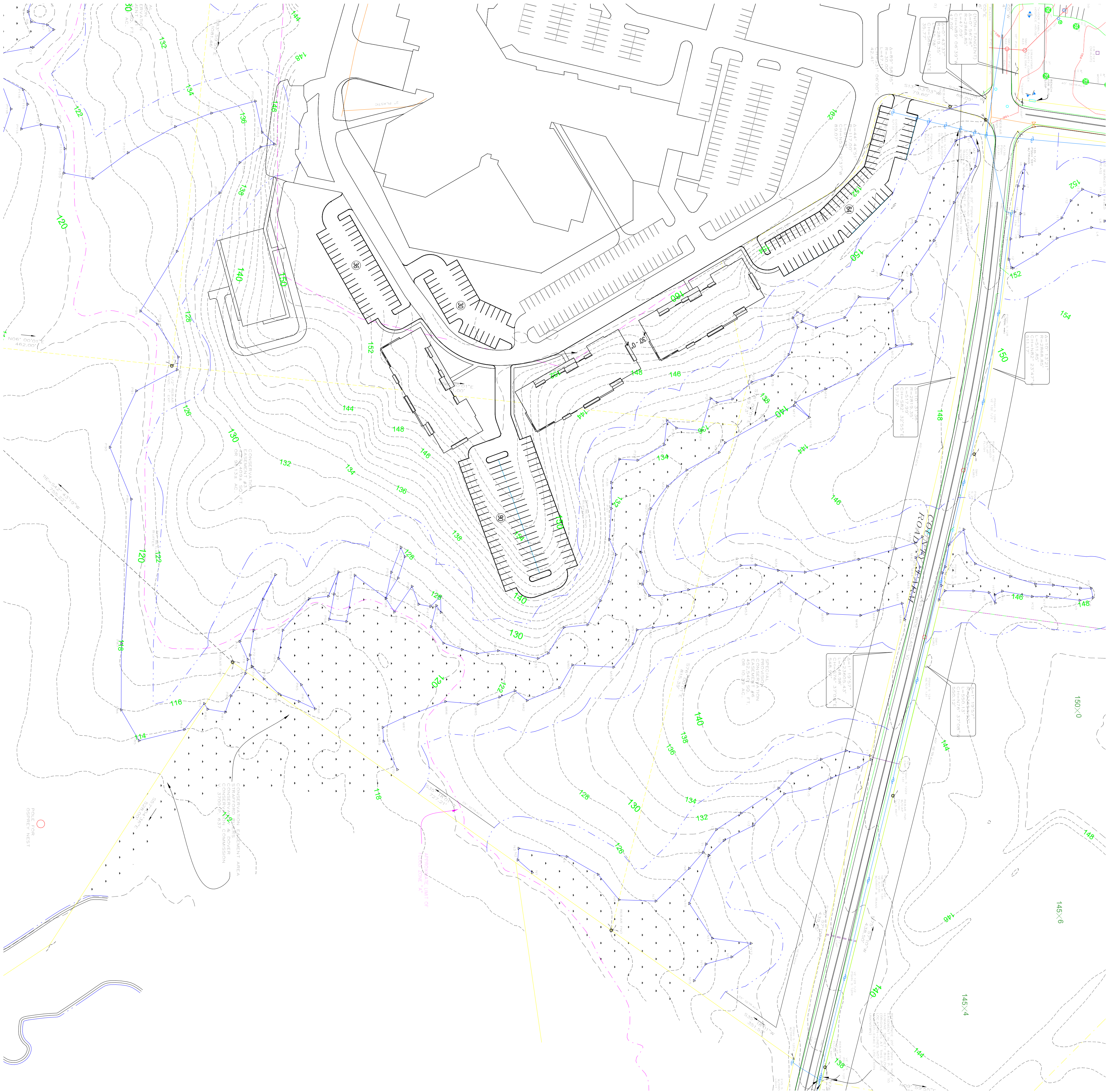
4

3

2

1

1 SITE PLAN
A100
1" = 80'-0"



TOTAL PARKING
220
NUMBER UNITS
174
(129 ONE BED, 45 TWO BED)

STRAFFORD COUNTY

OWNER
60 GEORGE MAGALAS, CHAIR
289 COUNTY PARK RD
DOVER, NH 03820
P: (603) 742-1458 F: (603) 743-4407

CONSTRUCTION W/GENERAL CONTRACTOR
TITLE 2
STREET
CITY / STATE / ZIP
P: () / () / ()

CONSULTANTS

CIVIL

NOBIS GROUP
18 CHEVELL DRIVE
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LANDSCAPE

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KEENE, NH 03431
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ELECTRICAL

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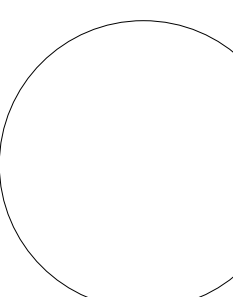
OTHER

NAME
STREET
CITY / STATE / ZIP
TELEPHONE

Warrenstreet
Planning Landscapes Architecture

WARRENSTREET ARCHITECTS, INC.
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SCALE:



PROJECT TITLE / ADDRESS
STRAFFORD COUNTY
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
DOVER, NH 03820

PLAN KEY:

SCALE: AS NOTED DWN BY: EM
PROJECT #: 1234 CHK BY: JH
PRINT DATE: 8/20/2026 12:24:35 PM
ISSUE DATE: 08/19/2026
PROGRESS SET

REVISION DATE COMMENTS

THIS DRAWING IS FORMATTED FOR 24x36 IN COLOR.

KEY/SITE PLAN

A100

SHEET NUMBER: OF 7 ARCHITECTURAL
THE DRAWING AND ITS CONTENT ARE THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF WARRENSTREET ARCHITECTS, INC. AND ARE NOT TO BE REPRODUCED OR TRANSMITTED IN ANY FORM OR BY ANY MEANS, ELECTRONIC OR MECHANICAL, INCLUDING PHOTOCOPYING, RECORDING, OR BY ANY INFORMATION STORAGE AND RETRIEVAL SYSTEM, WITHOUT THE WRITTEN PERMISSION OF WARRENSTREET ARCHITECTS, INC.

August 27, 2026 Commissioners Meeting – Still shots of proposed affordable housing
on county property fly around video.



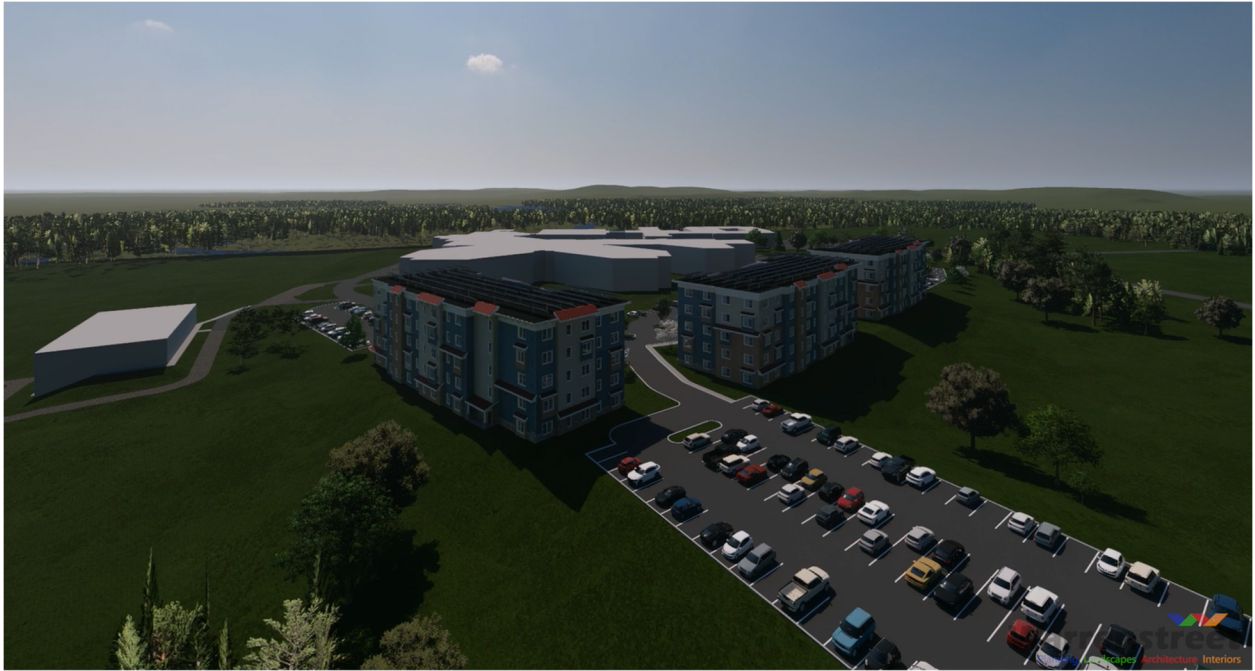
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In relation to the jail and warming center.



Strafford County Board of Commissioners
Non-Public Session

Date: AUGUST 27, 2026

Members Present: George Maglaras, Chairman, Leslie Feliciano, Vice Chair, and Sean M. Leavitt, Clerk.

Motion to enter Nonpublic Session: Commissioner Feliciano seconded by Commissioner Leavitt.

Specific Statutory Reason cited as foundation for the nonpublic session:

X RSA 91-A:3, II (a), **Discussing Personnel Matters.** *The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, **unless** the employee affected (1) has a right to a public meeting, and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.*

 RSA 91-A:3, II (e), **Discussing Contract Negotiations.** *Consideration or negotiation of pending claims or litigation which has been threatened in writing or filed by or against the public body or any subdivision thereof, or by or against any member thereof because of his or her membership in such public body, until the claim or litigation has been fully adjudicated or otherwise settled. Any application filed for tax abatement, pursuant to law, with any body or board shall not constitute a threatened or filed litigation against any public body for the purposes of this subparagraph.*

Roll Call Vote to enter nonpublic session:

YEAS: Maglaras, Feliciano, and Leavitt

NAYS: None

Entered non-public session at 10:24 a.m.

Other persons present during nonpublic session: Administrator Ray Bower. Description of matters discussed, and final decisions made. **Note:** Any votes taken must be recorded "in such a manner that the vote of each member is ascertained and recorded": No votes were taken; Personnel issues at Riverside and HOC were discussed.

Note: Under RSA 91-A:3, III. *Minutes of proceedings in nonpublic sessions shall be kept and the record of all actions shall be promptly made available for public inspection, except as provided in this section. Minutes and decisions reached in nonpublic session shall be publicly disclosed within 72 hours of the meeting, unless, by recorded vote of 2/3 of the members present, **taken in public session**, it is determined that divulgence of the information likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person **other than a member of this board**, or render the proposed action of the board ineffective, or pertain to terrorism. In the event of such circumstances, information may be withheld until, in the opinion of a majority of members, the aforesaid circumstances no longer apply.*

Motion to leave nonpublic session and return to public session by: Commissioner Leavitt; seconded by Commissioner Feliciano.

Motion: ☒ **PASSED** / ☐ **DID NOT PASS** (circle one)

Nonpublic meeting tape removed; public meeting tape replaced (if applicable). Not Applicable.

Public session reconvened at 11:14 a.m.

Motion to seal non-public minutes: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to seal the minutes of the non-public session; seconded by Commissioner Feliciano, because it is determined that divulgence of this information likely would:

X Affect adversely the reputation of any person other than a member of this board

Roll Call Vote to seal minutes:

YEAS: Maglaras, Feliciano, and Leavitt

NAYS: None

Motion: ☒ **PASSED** / ☐ **DID NOT PASS** (circle one)

These minutes recorded by: Janet Hilber, Executive Assistant

Commissioners' Initials