County of Merrimack Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes
Monday, August 10, 2026

Meeting conducted in person and electronically (via Zoom) at
333 Daniel Webster Highway, Ste. 2 Boscawen, NH 03303

Meeting ID: 868 4421 4713
Passcode: 543266

Start Time 10:00 a.m.

Present: Commissioner Trachy, Commissioner Lovlien, Commissioner Shurtleff

Staff: County Administrator Ross Cunningham, Finance Director Aaron Turner, Corrections Superintendent Garrett Jewell, Nursing Home Administrator Heather Moquin, Human Resources Director Wendy Heath, Assistant Human Resources Director Kelly Johnson, Network Administrator Tom Trumble, Facilities Director Dustin Muzzey, Purchasing Manager Jon Gardner, Development Coordinator Kara Coffey, Human Services Director Candice Coulter, IT Don Smith, Treasurer Mary Heath, Sheriff Dave Croft, Office Manager Deanna Fortier

Guests: Auditor Jim Roberge

Zoom Attendees: County Attorney Paul Halvorsen

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1. Call to Order

Chair Trachy called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

a. Consent Agenda

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve the consent agenda as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: Motion carried, 3–0

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2. Public Comment

a. None.

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3. Finance Director Aaron Turner

a. County Finances with Auditor

Auditor Jim Roberge presented the results of the County's 2025 audit. He reported that there were no concerns or matters requiring attention. He noted that there were no incorrect or material misstatements and no issues or disagreements with County staff or management regarding the audit materials. Mr. Roberge also discussed inmate account reconciliations, fund balance, and asked the Commissioners if they had any questions or concerns. The Commissioners had none. He further confirmed that there was no compliance issues reported as part of the audit.

b. 2nd Quarter Financials

Finance Director Turner presented an overview of the quarterly financials that will be shared with the Executive Committee at the August 14 meeting. He highlighted year-to-date, noting that revenues are tracking approximately $1.6 million over projections and expenditures are approximately $1.2 million under projections. A summary sheet, along with expenditure, revenue, grant, and other fund reports, was provided for review.

c. COLA Percentage, 2026 Budget

Director Turner presented the County's COLA recommendation and requested approval of a 4.00% COLA for the upcoming year. He noted that the County's policy, last updated on July 12, 2022, uses the past three-year average of the Northeast CPI-W to determine the COLA. The three-year July-to-July average is 3.79%, which, per County policy, rounds to 4.00%. The approved COLA will be incorporated into each department's budget, consistent with prior years.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve the COLA at a 4% rate for appropriate positions as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

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4. County Administrator Ross Cunningham & SMP Anthony Mento

a. Storage Building Design Plans

County Administrator Cunningham and SMP Architect Anthony Mento presented two storage building design options for consideration. Option F is a two-story, wood-framed gambrel-style building with removal and reconstruction of the concrete foundation, totaling approximately 3,267 square feet. Option J is a single-story, wood-framed slab-on-grade design utilizing the existing foundation with modifications, totaling approximately 2,000 square feet. Estimated costs and assumptions for each option were also presented.

Commissioner Shurtleff expressed support for the gambrel-style design, noting that the additional storage space would be highly beneficial during the McLeod renovation and would provide greater capacity for future growth. He also noted that the larger structure would be more aesthetically pleasing for the County and campus residents. Commissioner Lovlien agreed with

Commissioner Shurtleff and expressed his preference for the gambrel-style design due to the additional storage capacity.

Heating, plumbing, and fire suppression were briefly discussed. It was noted that a fire suppression system is not required for either design. Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed that the gambrel-style structure was the preferred option to move forward with.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve design F the two-story structure as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

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5. County Administrator Ross Cunningham

a. County Dashboard

Staff provided an update on the County dashboard; no significant concerns were reported.

b. Novogradac & Company Contract

County Administrator Cunningham presented a request for approval of an engagement agreement with Novogradac and Company to perform agreed-upon procedures related to prevailing wage and apprenticeship requirements for the County's solar project. The agreement was reviewed and discussed.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve the agreement with Novogradac & Company as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

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6. Development Coordinator Kara Coffey

a. Social Services Grant Program

Coordinator Coffey presented a request for approval to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Merrimack County Social Services Grant Program. The RFP is scheduled to be issued August 18, with proposals due September 15, at noon. The program provides competitive grant funding to social service agencies that provide critical services to Merrimack County residents, reduce or offset County expenditures, and enhance the quality of life in the community. Agencies must demonstrate financial need, with awards capped at $25,000 per organization.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve the Social Services Grant Program RFP as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

b. Cold Weather Shelter Program

Coordinator Coffee presented an overview of the Cold Weather Shelter Program and requested approval to issue an RFP. The RFP is scheduled to be issued August 14, 2026, with proposals due September 11, 2026, at noon. The County will serve as a pass-through for $165,000 in DHHS funding to approved agencies providing winter-specific shelter solutions for Merrimack County residents experiencing homelessness. Funding will be provided on a reimbursement basis and is intended for cold weather shelters, hotels, or other approved solutions from approximately November 1 through April 30.

Motion: Commissioner Shurtleff moved to approve the Cold Weather Shelter Program RFP as presented.
Second: Commissioner Lovlien
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

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7. Purchasing Manager Jon Gardner

a. MCNH Steam Oven

Three proposals were received for the replacement of a Vulcan C24GA10-PS steamer oven, ranging from $26,894.88 from Chef's Deal to $31,021.60 from Sam Tell. Chef's Deal is a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and Small Business Enterprise (SBE) and has served various government agencies throughout the United States. Chef's Deal has also been awarded multiple kitchen equipment solicitations by Merrimack County over the past several years and has successfully completed those purchases without incident. Approval was requested to proceed with Chef's Deal at the quoted cost of $26,894.88.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to approve the MCNH steam oven as presented.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: All in favor, 3–0

b. Fuel Rates

Fuel rates for the County were briefly discussed. It was noted that fuel costs are currently high, and the County continues to review options to identify the most cost-effective solutions.

Board of Commissioner Comments

a. None

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8. Unfinished Business

a. August & September meeting calendars were reviewed.

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9. New Business

Human Resources Assistant Director Kelly Johnson

a. Health Insurance

County health insurance was put out to bid last week. An update will be provided once available.

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10. Staff Comments

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11. Non-Public Session

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to enter non-public session at 10:47 a.m. pursuant to RSA 91-A:3, II(a) – personnel.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff

Roll Call Vote:

Trachy – Yes
Shurtleff – Yes
Lovlien – Yes

Vote: Motion carried, 3–0

Chairman Trachy reconvened the public session at 11:06a.m.

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to seal the non-public minutes for five years, as divulgence could adversely affect the reputation of a person other that a Board member or render the proposed action ineffective.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff

Roll Call Vote:

Trachy – Yes
Shurtleff – Yes
Lovlien – Yes

Vote: Motion carried unanimously, 3-0. The minutes were sealed.

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12. Adjournment

Motion: Commissioner Lovlien moved to adjourn at 11:08 a.m.
Second: Commissioner Shurtleff
Vote: Motion carried unanimously, 3–0

Approved by:

Stephen Shurtleff, Clerk