COÖS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS MEETING
Coös County Administrative Offices
34 County Farm Road – Stewartstown, NH
July 17, 2026

Present: Commissioners Thomas Brady, Raymond Gorman and Robert Théberge; County Administrator Mark Brady; Superintendent of Corrections Ben Champagne; Director of Finance Carrie Klebe; Nursing Home Administrator Louise Belanger; Surpivising Nursing Hospital Administrator Ashley Hodge; Assistant Finance Manager Christine Labelle; County Treasurer Sue Collins; Sheriff Keith Roberge; Administrative Assistant Linda Harris and members of the public.

1. Chairman Brady called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed everyone. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Superintendent Ben Champagne.

2. *Approval of the Agenda*. A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman, seconded by Commissioner Théberge, to move items under "Other Business" following the approval of the minutes. A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman, seconded by Commissioner Théberge to approve the agenda, as amended. The motion was approved 3-0.

3. *Approval of the Minutes of July 8, 2026, regular meeting, as distributed*. A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman seconded by Commissioner Théberge to approve the minutes of July 8, 2026, regular meeting. The motion was approved 3-0.

4. Other Business:
   a. *Coös County Nursing Hospital/Rural Transformation Funds*. Chairman Brady announced that the purpose of the meeting was to provide updated information.

      Commissioner Gorman reported that a meeting was held in Clarksville with some of the local Boards to discuss the nursing hospital.

      County Administrator Brady stated that he had contacted CDFA for clarification relating to the funding, The response read as follows:

      Hi Mark,

      Thank you for your question. I am happy to clarify the status of the application and the GO-NORTH Rural Community Health Infrastructure Program (RCHIP) process.

      CDFA understands that the County's project was identified in the State's application to CMS as a potential infrastructure investment aligned with the goals of the Rural Health Transformation Plan. However, that action did not constitute an award of GO-NORTH RCHIP funding the project. Funding awards will be made through a competitive application process administered by CDFA during Budget Period 1. Applications for Budget Period 1 are due on September 1, 2026.

      Based on the information provided to date and our review of the program priorities, the

County's project appears to be well-aligned with the objectives and eligibility requirements for Budget Period 1. Coos County submitted the Request for Eligibility Determination to get started in the CDFA system and we expect Coos to be invited to complete a full application during the Budget Period 1 application period shortly.

It is important to note that an eligibility determination is not a funding commitment. The full application process will evaluate project readiness, scope, budget, community impact, and alignment with the State's Rural Health Transformation goals before funding decisions are made. At this time, there is no awarded funding that the County would lose by not beginning construction immediately, although applicants are encouraged to continue advancing project planning and readiness activities, so they are prepared for the application and review process.

I hope this helps clarify the distinction between inclusion in the State's plan, eligibility for the program, and a future funding award. Please feel free to share this information with residents, and don't hesitate to reach out if additional questions arise.

Best regards, Rebecca Boisvert

The County Administrator explained that the actual funding has not been committed. At the last meeting it was implied by members in the public and in an email by Councilor Kenney that those funds would be lost if the academy project did not move forward.

The RFQ went out on Tuesday, July 14 and closes August 7. Up to four sites will be assessed, which will include the nursing hospital and the Colebrook Academy. The site must be identified by October 30, 2026. Ultimately the delegation will have to approve of what the Board recommends. The site does not need to be selected by September 1 when the application is due.

Commissioner Gorman noted that the email clarified and simplified some of his questions. He asked if the CDFA would be willing to speak to the Board. Chairman Brady suggested that the CDFA come to W. Stewartstown or join via an online call at a future meeting so that everyone who wanted could participate. He wanted it to be accessible to Coös residents, and he said that he would not go to Concord for a meeting. The Chair said that the County needed to stay on this course as set up by the CDFA.

Commissioner Théberge said that the nursing home situation was consuming the Administrators' time and taking him away from other duties. Commissioner Théberge proposed that a consultant be hired to oversee the nursing home situation. Commissioner Gorman replied that the decision will be up to the County Administrator. Chairman Brady agreed with Commissioner Théberge. He noted that the Board will not be meeting for another three weeks and asked if the Board would agree to authorize the hiring of a consultant prior to the August meeting. A motion was made by

Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Gorman to authorize the County Administrator to look into a consultant to assist with the nursing home project. The motion was approved 3-0.

b. *Coös County Department of Corrections*. The County Administrator reported that a proposal had been received from Grafton County to house the inmates. He is formulating a response to them. Dave Croft, the Merrimack County Sheriff, who is retiring, will assist with the assessment and response.

An agreement has been made to accept a DOJ grant in the amount of $65,000 for a pretrial services program. The program will be kept no matter what happens to the jail.

Commissioner Théberge inquired about the 2027 budget implications. He also noted that the transportation issue (inmates) will need to be addressed.

c. *Reading of Public Comment Policy*. The County Administrator reported that he was tasked to look into policies relating to public comment during a meeting. The following was created with the assistance of an attorney. The proposed policy was read by Commissioner Théberge. This was the first reading of the proposed policy. The second reading and approval will occur at the August meeting.

Public Comment Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure orderly, efficient, and equitable public participation during meetings of the Coös County Board of Commissioners, while allowing adequate time for all interested parties to be heard.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy:

Board: *Refers to the Coös County Board of Commissioners.*

Chairperson: *The presiding officer of the Board meeting, or their designee.*

Public Comment Period: *A designated portion of a public meeting during which members of the public may address the Board on matters within its jurisdiction.*

Disruptive Behavior: *Includes, but is not limited to, shouting, interrupting speakers or Board members, using profane or threatening language, or failing to yield the floor when time has expired or when ruled out of order.*

Right to Know Law: *New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) Chapter 91-A, which governs public access to government meetings and records.*

Policy Statement

The Board of Commissioners encourages public attendance and participation. To promote fairness, transparency, and a productive meeting structure, the following rules shall govern the public comment period (not a public hearing):

1. ***One person speaks at a time*** *(no interrupting), and no one speaks until recognized by the chair. Public comment is time for members of the public to speak; it is not a "question and answer session" with the public body.*

2. ***Speaking Time.*** *Each member of the public who wishes to address the Board during the designated public comment period shall be restricted to three (3) minutes to speak. Speakers may speak for longer only if the Board agrees to extend the time for each speaker, and only to the extent that the Board approves the extension. Individuals shall not be allowed to yield or donate their time to other individuals to circumvent the time limitation set forth herein. Individuals wishing to speak will not be allowed to address the Board more than once during the public comment session.*

3. ***Time Management.*** *A timer or similar device may be used to monitor and enforce time limits.*

4. ***In accordance with RSA 91-A:2****, each speaker must state their name for the record. In addition, each speaker shall identify their address and the subject matter or matters they will discuss. Speakers should address the issue(s) directly and as briefly as possible. Matters raised during public comment shall be limited to matters within the Board's purview. Speakers who raise matters outside the Board's purview may be ruled out of order. Examples of matters that may be ruled out of order include, but are not limited to, promotion of private businesses or products, disputes between private citizens, complaints about other County boards, and other items that do not implicate the County or matters within the Board's purview.*

5. ***Respect and Decorum.*** *Public speakers addressing the Board must conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, slanderous, defamatory, vulgar, disruptive, repetitious, disorderly, or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated.*

6. ***Comments Involving Personnel or Private Individuals.*** *Public comments regarding individual County employees or private individuals, or any matter that may infringe on another person's right to privacy, will not be permitted during the public comment period. Such concerns should be directed to the Human Resources Coordinator or County Administrator during normal business hours.*

7. ***Enforcement.*** *A speaker or speakers who do not follow these rules after being warned to do so by the Chair of the Board may be subject to one or more of the following actions: (a) requiring the speaker to yield the floor, (b) terminating the public comment period for that meeting, (c) taking a temporary recess, (d) demanding that the violating speaker(s) leave the premises, (e) seeking to have the individual removed by a law enforcement*

officer, or (f) any combination of the foregoing actions and/or such other actions as may be deemed appropriate by the Board.

Implementation

This policy shall be posted on the Coös County website and referenced at applicable Board meetings and copies available at Board meetings where public comment is being permitted.

Legal Authority

This policy is adopted pursuant to the authority granted to the Board of Commissioners and in accordance with ***RSA 91-A: 2*** *(Meetings Open to the Public), which requires that meetings of public bodies be open and accessible to the public. While public participation is not mandated by RSA 91-A, this policy is intended to foster transparency and encourage informed public involvement.*

d. Director of Finance Carrie Klebe presented items for the Board's approval:

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORITY

I, Thomas Brady of the Coös County Board of Commissioners do hereby certify that:

(1) the Board of Commissioners voted on July 17, 2026, to accept funds and enter into a grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department of Justice in the amount of $65,000;
(2) The Board of Commissioners further authorizes the County Administrator to execute any documents which may be necessary for this contract;
(3) This authorization has not been revoked, annulled or amended in any manner whatsoever, and remains in full force and effect as of the date hereof
(4) This authority remains valid for (30) days from the date of this Certificate of Authority; and
(5) The following now occupies the position indicated above:

Mark Brady
County Administrator

A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Gorman to approve the certificate of authority. The motion was approved 3-0.

Grant Agreement with Coös County Sheriff's Department
Homeland Security Grant Program
Amendment No. 1

This Agreement (hereinafter called the Amendment) is by and between the State of New Hampshire, acting by and through its Department of Safety (hereinafter referred to as the State) and the Coös County Sheriff's Department (hereinafter referred to as the Grantee).

WHEREAS, pursuant to an Agreement (hereinafter called the Agreement) approved by the Governor and Council on April 15, 2026, item #83, the Grantee agreed to perform certain services upon the terms and conditions specified in the Agreement and in consideration of payment by the State of certain sums as specified therein; and

WHEREAS, The Grantee and the State have agreed to amend the Agreement in certain respects;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing, and the covenants and conditions contained in the Agreement and set forth herein, the parties hereto do hereby agree as follows:

(1) <u>Amendment and Modification of Agreement:</u> The Agreement is hereby amended as follows:

a. The completion Date as set forth in sub-paragraph 1.7 of the Agreement shall be changed to August 31, 2028 from September 30, 2026

All other conditions outlined in the contract shall remain in effect.

(2) <u>Effective Date of Amendment:</u> This Amendment shall take effect upon the date of approval of this Amendment by the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire.

(3) <u>Continuance of Agreement:</u> Except as specifically amended and modified by the terms and conditions of this Amendment, the Agreement, and the obligations of the parties thereunder, shall remain in full force and effect in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth therein.

A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Gorman to approve Amendment No. 1 of the Coös County Sheriff's Department Homeland Security Grant Program. The motion was approved 3-0.

The Director of Finance also presented an updated land agreement between Coös County and Blue Mountain Dairy. This agreement runs through the end of 2026 and then will be on a yearly basis. A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman, seconded by Commission Théberge to approve the updated land agreement. The motion was approved 3-0.

The County Treasurer suggested that if the land is not in current use that it should be to save the taxpayers money.

5. <u>*Hearing of the Public*</u>.
Lynn Dorman, Stewartstown, stated that it is always being noted that renovations cannot be done while the residents are in the W. Stewartstown Nursing Home. Is it possible that there are options and should be looked into. Chairman Brady reiterated that it is very problematic to renovate while residents are in the building. Ms. Dorman reiterated that West Stewartstown must be looked at. The County Administrator said that earlier in the meeting he had stated that West Stewartstown would be looked at for its viability.

Ms. Dorman asked why the Public Comment Policy was changed. Chairman Brady replied that there was no policy in place.

Don Noyes, Stewartstown, noted that the area cannot afford to lose residents and jobs. The nursing home must remain in the local area. Ethan Allen is down to 85 employees.

Chairman Brady replied that he agreed that it is vital to keep the nursing home jobs. The County Administrator said that an economic impact analysis had been done which showed that closure of the facility would create a nearly $300 million hole in the county economy over 10 years.

Allen Coats, Stewartstown Selectman, noted that he was at Mary Hitchcock in Dartmouth for a procedure during construction and the noise was bearable. It is the duty of the elected officials to listen to the people. It should not be a commissioner's decision but a decision of the people. Chairman Brady replied that the Commissioners were listening to the people and that is why they went down the path set up by the CDFA for an RFQ/RFP but ultimately the Delegation will make the final decision.

Wayne Dorman, Pittsburg, stated that the engineering study should help to decide the location. He asked if the same degree of consideration will be given to West Stewartstown as it was in Colebrook. He supports maintaining the current nursing home.

Signed petitions were presented to the Board in favor of keeping the nursing home at its current location.

6. *Any other business*.
   The Board requested that the Finance Director prepare the request for fuel bids.

7. *Any other public input*. None.

8. *Non-public sessions RSA 91-A:3 II(g) & RSA 91-A:3 II(a)*:
   A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman, seconded by Commissioner Théberge at 9:53 a.m. to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II(a). The motion was approved 3-0. A motion was made by Commissioner Gorman, seconded by Commissioner Théberge at 10:03 a.m. to exit non-public session. The motion was approved 2-0. A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Brady to seal the minutes for a period of one year (7/19/2027). The motion was approved 2-0. *Commissioner Gorman left the meeting at 10:03 a.m.*

   A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Brady at 10:07 a.m. to enter non-public session per RSA 91-A:3, II(g). The motion was approved 2-0. A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Gorman at 10:34 a.m. to exit non-public session. The motion was approved 2-0. A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Brady to seal the minutes for a period of one year (7/19/2027). The motion was approved 2-0.

Superintendent Champagne noted that at the October 2025 recycling center meeting he had presented the member towns with a budget that included a 28-hour position, if needed. He is now at that point. He informed the Board that the position will be posted. He will be informing the member towns of the change.

Cpl. Lesperance and Mr. Beauchemin have visited Littleton and Franconia recycling centers to obtain ideas on making the recycling center more efficient.

Wayne Dorman presented another petition to the Board. He noted that copies of the petitions that were presented today would also be presented to the Delegation on Monday. The Delegation needs to get the feel of the public as well.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 12, 2026, at the Coös County Administrative Offices in Stewartstown beginning at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Commissioner Théberge, seconded by Commissioner Brady to adjourn the meeting at 10:46 a.m. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Robert Théberge, Clerk