

STRAFFORD COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES – DRAFT

THURSDAY, MAY 14, 2026

Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88076078990?pwd=XhfZv740rC78qR5pDjpARV2GadmFIV.1>

Meeting ID: 880 7607 8990 Passcode: 391058

A public meeting of the Strafford County Commissioners was held Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Conference Room, Justice and Administration 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, Finance Director Diane Legere, Sheriff Kathryn Mone, Chief Deputy Ray Pardy, EMD Director Justin Bellen, HOC Superintendent Chris Brackett, IT Specialist Kelly Parker, Susan Rice, and Executive Assistant/Deputy Treasurer Janet Hilber.

1. Approve Minutes of May 8, and May 12, 2026: Commissioner Feliciano motioned to approve the minutes of May 8, and May 12, 2026 as written. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Leavitt, and approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.
2. Authorize and Sign Tax Anticipation Note Documents for \$16,000,000: Director Legere presented the loan documents from M & T Bank with a rate of 3.60% as awarded during the Commissioners' meeting of May 12, 2026. Commissioner Feliciano motioned to authorize and sign the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN) documents for \$16,000,000.00. Commissioner Leavitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a roll call vote.
3. Recognition of National Peace Officers Memorial Week – May 15th through May 22nd: Sheriff Mone expressed appreciation for the Commission's recognition of Peace Officers Memorial Week, observed May 15th through May 22nd, and noted that flags will be flown at half-staff in honor of Peace Officers Memorial Day on Friday, May 15th. She reported that two Deputy Sheriffs will attend the 34th Annual New Hampshire Law Enforcement Memorial Service in Concord on Friday, May 22, 2026, to represent the Strafford County Sheriff's Office and place the first rose in the dedication wreath. Sheriff Mone noted that Police Memorial Week serves as an important reminder of the sacrifices made by law enforcement officers and the enduring commitment of those who continue to serve their communities. Commissioner Feliciano motioned to recognize May 15th through May 22nd as National Peace Officers Memorial Week. Commissioner Leavitt seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by voice vote.
4. Recognize the 2026 Charles E. Smith Memorial Award Recipient: Sheriff Mone reported that Deputy Taylor Griffin received the 2026 Charles E. Smith Memorial Award. Established in 2008, the award is presented annually in May as part of the office's observance of Law Enforcement Memorial Day and honors Deputy Charles E. Smith, the first law enforcement officer from Strafford County to be killed in the line of duty during the apprehension of a suspected thief in 1891. Sheriff Mone also congratulated Dispatch Supervisor Alexandra Pelletier recipient of the Annual Civilian Award. Plaques will be presented in the near future. Chairman Maglaras requested Deputy Griffin and Supervisor Pelletier attend an upcoming meeting for the Commissioners to personally recognize them for their dedication and service.
5. Hands-Only CPR Trainings in Support of the NH CPR Challenge – May 20th and May 21: Strafford County Sheriff's Office will be hosting Hands-Only CPR trainings in support of the New Hampshire CPR Challenge [Free CPR Training in New Hampshire | EMS Week 2026](#) on Wednesday, May 20, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Thursday, May 21, 2026 from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Café Conference Room of the William A. Grimes Justice and Administration Building. The Commissioners will schedule next week's meeting around attending the CPR training on Thursday, May 22, 2026.
6. Upcoming Events: Chairman Maglaras asked if there were any upcoming events to discuss. The following events were discussed:
 - a. 21st Annual Fondest Wish Golf Tournament on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at Cochecho Country Club, Dover
 - b. HOC Awards Banquet at the Governor's Inn on Thursday, June 25, 2026
7. Old and New Business: Chairman Maglaras asked if there was any old or new business to discuss. Clarification was provided in response to questions raised by legislators about the county budget status following the county delegation's failure to adopt a budget.

A comparison was drawn to federal continuing resolutions, noting the county statute operates differently and more specifically. NH RSA 24:14 II states: “The county convention shall adopt the annual budget within 90 days after the beginning of the county's fiscal year if the county operates on a calendar year basis. ... If the county convention does not adopt the annual budget by the time specified, the budget, as recommended by the commissioners, shall take effect as the county budget.” It was noted that the Commission had amended its proposed budget prior to March 31st, primarily to reflect grant applications, without affecting the tax rate. The Commission's Proposed Budget (as amended) is the operative budget for the current year

An update was provided on the demolition of the old Humane Society/piggery building which began yesterday morning and was expected to be completed by the end of May 14th, with all materials hauled to a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-compliant landfill. The structure was described as an eyesore that had deteriorated through no fault of anyone, but due to age and multiple uses over the years.

County officials discussed recent adjustments made by the New Hampshire Senate to the state budget that could significantly affect nursing home reimbursement rates. Commissioners noted that the outcome was “not what we had hoped for,” explaining that legislation tied to changes in the business profits tax originally included funding dedicated to nursing home rates. According to the discussion, Senator Gray removed that funding provision after reportedly limiting testimony during hearings to representatives from Health and Human Services, while representatives from the New Hampshire Health Care Association and the New Hampshire Association of Counties were not permitted to speak. Officials explained that approximately \$3 million remaining in the current nursing home account, known as the 504 account, would normally be distributed directly to nursing homes under existing statute. Instead, the proposal would roll those funds into next year's Medicaid rates, allowing the federal government to match the amount and effectively creating a \$6 million rate adjustment built into the future base rate structure. While participants acknowledged this could provide some long-term benefit, they emphasized that the preferred outcome would have been both the direct distribution of the surplus funds and the higher future reimbursement rates.

The conversation broadened into concerns about the growing financial instability of nursing homes across New Hampshire and the long-term sustainability of the Medicaid funding system. Officials noted that another nursing home, the Merriman home, had recently closed, and referenced larger nursing home chains experiencing repeated bankruptcies and sales. Participants warned that the industry may increasingly consolidate into a small number of large national operators capable of absorbing mounting costs, comparing the trend to consolidation seen in other industries. Commissioners stated that state Medicaid funding currently falls far short of actual costs, estimating a “budget neutrality factor” reduction of roughly 30 to 34 percent, leaving counties responsible for covering much of the shortfall through property taxes. They also highlighted the financial challenges counties face when unexpected state costs are imposed late in the budget process, including a recent half-million-dollar reduction in revenue received shortly before finalizing the county budget. Officials concluded that without major policy changes and stronger state leadership on Medicaid financing, counties will continue struggling to maintain services while balancing budgets without the ability to deficit spend.

8. 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.
9. 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 9:25 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.
10. Return to Public Session: Commissioner Leavitt motioned to return to public session at 11:47 a.m. Commissioner Feliciano seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously (3 to 0) by a voice vote.
11. 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.

12. Adjournment: The Commissioners signed paperwork as appropriate. Commissioner Leavitt motioned to adjourn the meeting at 11:54 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

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