

***VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND
ADVISORY COMMITTEE***

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
March 15, 2001***

Approved Minutes

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

March 15, 2001

Health and Welfare Building
Conference Room 312
6 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Armstrong, IT Manager, DITM Appointment
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Tom Janosz, Funeral Director Appointment
Patricia Little, City Clerk Member
Debra Eastman, Town Clerk Appointment
David Kruger, Public Member Appointment
Paul Bergeron, Nashua City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Jane Ireland, Town Clerk Member
Pat Seskes, Health Information Specialist Appointment
Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment

STAFF PRESENT:

Mark Andrew, Administrator, Division of Epidemiology and Vital Statistics, OCPH
Melanie A. Orman, Program Specialist, DEVS
Stephen M. Wurtz, Supervisor, Bureau of Vital Records
Melvin Friese, Information Technology
Barbara Whittemore, Secretary, DEVS

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

1. Introduction of New Committee Member:

The meeting was called to order at 10:07 AM by the chair, Ms. Little. She began with an introduction of Mr. Paul Bergeron. Mr. Bergeron has joined the committee as a replacement for Ms. Sharon Dery, Concord's former City Clerk. Attendees were asked to introduce themselves to Mr. Bergeron and Ms. Little asked Mr. Bolton to provide him with the committee minutes for the last year. Ms. Little also asked that he be provided the policy regarding distributions from the fund and a member roster. Mr. Bolton mentioned that the minutes are available on the website.

2. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the January 18, 2001 meeting were presented for approval. Mr. Kruger asked that a correction be made to the spelling of his name. With the correction noted Ms. Little made a motion to approve the corrected minutes, Mr. Kruger seconded. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes.

3. DHHS OIS Update:

Budget Discussion, Capitol Improvement Web Enablement Project:

Mr. Brook Dupee was scheduled to discuss the ongoing budget approval process. Mr. Bolton informed the committee that Mr. Dupee would be presenting but was currently unavailable. Ms. Little agreed to revisit to the issue when Mr. Dupee arrived.

Mr. Friese, representing OIS, presented the DHHS OIS Update. He provided members with a handout, outlining the information regarding the new build rollout. He reported that OIS is currently testing the new VRV2000 software and Mr. Gerow was able to build the application last week. Mr. Friese and Mr. Milligan are testing it this week. They hope to complete testing by this Friday and begin allowing Vital Records staff to do their own testing. After that, field users will be invited to come in. Mr. Wurtz has a list of volunteers to invite. Following user testing, Mantech will make any required fixes and release a complete version for us to distribute. At that point OIS will build the Install CD-ROM and either reproduce it in-house or send it to a contractor to make multiple copies. The next VRV Users meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 10 and if ready, the new CD-ROM will be distributed to attendees. The CD will have to be mailed to those not in attendance.

Database Conversion:

The conversion of the database will occur the weekend of May 11. The data will be moved from a 7 to an 8i Oracle database. What this means is that we will not have access to the production database during the time it takes to do the conversion. Funeral homes will need to be notified that it will not be available to them during the weekend. It will hopefully be up and running again on May 14. At that point everyone should have version 3 software running on the new Oracle database.

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The Communications RFP Status:

A rough draft for DHHS's state-wide communication solution has been created and Mr. Parris will meet with Mr. Bailey and Mr. Gerow to determine how to best go forward with the project. They are currently looking at two different bandwidths that support TCP/IP, 56kps for smaller locations and 256kps for larger ones. Weekly and monthly usage reporting and a trouble reporting and tracking mechanism will be built into the RFP.

OIS hopes for a single point of contact for centralized trouble shooting and resolution. Monitoring of the communications connectivity during regular business hours, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday will be required in the contract. The RFP does not require a specific approach to provide the service, the idea is the vendors will provide the different levels of service (bandwidth speed) they offer and the cost associated with each.

Ms. Little asked if we are just looking to see where vendors presently have service? Mr. Friese stated that he is not familiar enough with this project to answer her question, but would be happy to take her question back to OIS. Mr. Bolton stated that all the rollout sites were listed on the RFP so that vendors would be aware of the locations involved and understand that it would be their responsibility to provide the service, either on their own or through subcontracting. Mr. Kruger inquired as to the number of vendors that would normally respond to this type of RFP. Again, Mr. Friese replied that he was uncertain of the answer, that Mr. Gerow typically handles that area.

Data Conversion:

Mr. Friese reported that the Database Administrator would be importing approximately 40,000 records that evening from local registrars into the production VRV database. 33,000 of these imported records are birth records. Those records would be available the following morning to VRV users. That is basically the first step in bringing all AVRIS records into VRV. The next step is finalizing an import process.

They hope to complete testing next week and will then turn it over and train staff in the business office so that they might begin importing records. They hope to start with Manchester and the new VRV sites and then add the other pilot sites and the Vitts sites. There will be a large increase in the number of records available for 1948 through 1989. Eventually, AVRIS will be shut down for good. Ms. Little asked if OIS would have to visit the sites to collect the records. Mr. Friese explained that during the last clerk users meeting, clerks brought zip disks containing their records. Mr. Wurtz added that we have a great deal of information from the initial sites and will go back and ask them to provide it again, to catch any that may have fallen through the cracks. Mr. Kruger asked how many records were being converted for that forty-year period. Mr. Friese replied that there were approximately 600,000 birth, 500,000 death, 400,000 marriage and 300,000 divorce for that time period. Ms. Little asked if adding that much data would slow down the system. Mr. Friese replied that no, it should not slow response time. Mr. Wurtz and Mr. Bolton both commented on how much the speed of searches has been improved through the use of indexes that the Database Administrator built to streamline inquiries.

4. Electronic Death Registration Pilot:

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Mr. Bolton explained that The Social Security Administration had recently invited the New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Records to participate in a joint SSA/NAPHSIS pilot for electronic death registration. They are looking at 2 processes, 24-hour notification and on-line verification of Social Security numbers. Specifically because of the benefit of VRV and our ability to get the information into and out of our system so quickly, we would more than likely be able to comply with their requirements. Mr. Bolton will be speaking with Pam Akison, a consultant with NAPHSIS who is working on this pilot.

Ultimately, SSA wants an automated, web-enabled method, which would allow us to spin off data from our database and send it directly to the SSA. Mr. Bolton was not aware of the compensation this pilot would bring, but felt that we would be looking at budget enhancements from SSA. Our ability to provide them with data quickly may also mean contract enhancements. Mr. Bolton explained that New Jersey had initially been asked to participate, but has not yet been able to get the program up and running – possibly due to SSA's need to develop a back-end verification program.

Mr. Wurtz added that it is quite notable for the state to be invited to work with the SSA. He went on to explain that no other state had even come close in meeting the SSA's strict requirements, so it is an honor for New Hampshire. Mr. Bolton added that representatives from the SSA had attended one of our VRIFAC meetings and seemed to be impressed with our death registration procedures. Mr. Wurtz stated and asked Mr. Bolton to confirm that New Hampshire is still the number 1 state in the nation regarding provision of birth and death data to SSA and National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), as well as the only state with a fully automated process. Mr. Bolton replied that NCHS does not consider our system to be a true EDR because they envision an EDR as having the certifying physician, pronouncing physician or Medical Examiner initiating a death record followed by information that the funeral home is responsible for. New Hampshire allows the Funeral Homes to complete the Death Certificate from the worksheet, which is not quite in line with NCHS's desire. However the trouble in New Jersey seems to stem from their handling their electronic registration according to NCHS standards. Of 500 new death records added, only 50 were complete. In New Hampshire, the Funeral Director must complete the record to get the burial permit. Ms. Little asked if having the physician start the record was not our original intention. Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz agreed that it was and would continue to be, as we become more web based. At this time, the Medical Examiner is online and the only physician currently performing that function for us.

Mr. Andrew asked what the pilot would require of New Hampshire. Mr. Bolton replied that Mr. Friese had suggested the need for Rich Sliwoski, our Database Administrator to be involved in the meeting tomorrow. Depending on their requirements, we may be able to get away with a manual system, which would require very little as far as we are concerned. However, if we want to participate in the manner that they are probably envisioning, it will require some changes to the database. We may be able to do those changes in house, or if we want to automate it to the extent of changing our software, it would involve some expenditure to have ManTech do these changes. Ms. Little asked Mr. Bolton to clarify his statement regarding there being a financial reward. He replied that New Jersey had been compensated for their participation and it hadn't even been successful, so he was under the impression that the reward would be substantial.

Budget/Web Enablement:

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Ms. Little asked if there was someone else that could report to the committee on the status on this item in Mr. Dupee's absence. Mr. Bolton reported that he was under the impression that Mr. Dupee was going to provide information on the timeline of budget considerations, the Governor's Rally this afternoon, the HB1 hearing on Saturday, the web enablement piece in the Governor's budget, and show avenues in which citizens can show their support for the Governor's budget.

Ms. Little added that in an effort to garner legislative support, she has been contacting the Town Clerks in Representatives' home towns, encouraging vocal support from local constituents. She has asked the clerks to call their representative today or tomorrow, before the vote to explain that this is an important item to support for all the cities and towns of New Hampshire. To explain the only way to take VRV statewide is through web enablement.

Ms. Little hopes to have Rep. Larry Emerton, a Republican from Goffstown, bring up the legislation and/or Rep. Fran Wendelboe, a Republican from New Hampton. Rep. Wendelboe was chair of the Health, Human Services and Elderly Affairs subcommittee a couple years ago when there were discussions about the fund, raising fees, running out of money, and ironing out differences. Both Reps. Emerton and Wendelboe are two people with first hand experience with Vital Records and will be very helpful. Ms. Little will also be contacting Ms. Evelyn Connor, Town Clerk from Weare, Rep. Kurk's hometown.

Ms. Little expressed interested in the timeline of the Governor's budget. Mr. Andrew deferred this question to Mr. Dupee.

Records Preservation Fund:

Mr. Bolton reported that there had been no new developments since our last meeting. After the election, there were a few less members on the subcommittee. They are not required to report until November 1, 2001. It will be important for us to have a bill filed by title only, before April 15 (unsure of correct date). Hopefully after the budget crisis is solved, we can reassemble the committee over the summer and get language introduced under an LSR.

Ms. Little asked who was responsible to get the LSR introduced. It was determined that it should be Rep. Leone from Sunapee because he was the original co-sponsor of 1151 and Rep. Dokmo who was the other co-sponsor. Another good person would be Rep. Zerba, chairman of the subcommittee. Ms. Little asked what the title of the bill should be? Mr. Bergeron responded "A Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund".

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Ms. Eastman mentioned that she went to the Division of Motor Vehicles yesterday for a tour intended to show clerks what they are doing as far as bringing clerks online. There was some discussion regarding Clerks going online with Motor Vehicle and some testing that is going on to see if that would also work with Vital Records. She asked if anyone could tell her more about that and how and if that will that will effect the rollout of VRV. She mentioned that the committee generally thinks of hospital towns when considering new sites, but maybe we should look more at towns that will already be online with Motor Vehicles.

Ms. Eastman also asked if all the departments are working together and not duplicating efforts. Mr. Friese replied that Mr. Gerow attended a meeting last week with Motor Vehicles. He was not aware of the outcome of the meeting, but he was under the impression that Mr. Gerow was involved and was planning to meet with them again today, but that meeting was cancelled. There are ongoing meetings being held to study the feasibility of the different departments working together.

Ms. Eastman mentioned that she got the impression from the folks at Motor Vehicle that it would not be a difficult task for the two agencies to share resources and she does not always get that feeling from these committee meetings. Mr. Bolton replied that a coordinated rollout is something to take advantage of, but our number 1 priority should be getting away from our client-server software and into a web-enabled platform. Ms. Little asked how close DMV is to web enablement. Mr. Bolton said he was unsure where they were with that bid. Right now they seem to be focusing on the frame relay solution. Ms. Little asked for an update on the situation for the next meeting.

5. Additional business.

Mr. Janosz inquired as to whether or not there had been any new problems with the software, connectivity, etc. He hadn't heard anything but was curious. Mr. Wurtz replied that things have been relatively quiet. Adding that we seemed to have lived through the learning curve of the newest VRV sites. Mr. Janosz stated that he will be glad to see the need to distribute the clerk's disks end. He believes that clerks are under the impression that he gets them free from the state and do not return them. It has become costly for him to purchase disks by the box only to run through them very quickly.

Mr. Armstrong came in and Ms. Little asked for his input on the situation with Motor Vehicles and where they are in the process of going online. He replied that DHHS and DMV have met and DMV presented a very high-level project plan. Once the issues they discovered in working together are worked through, there would efficiencies in operation and resource savings. The larger towns are networked, but the majority of smaller ones are not, so we cannot take advantage of that.

There are issues around what can be shared, responsibilities, cost sharing and the necessary memorandums of agreement. It is still early in the process, the municipalities would all have to be brought onboard and the biggest issues are still, security and privacy. How do they know a LAN is secure? Security is paramount for law enforcement, particularly, the State Police. Who would be the overall keeper of this plan? Mr. Armstrong explained that another meeting is planned within the next couple of weeks.

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Mr. Armstrong also reported that the Governor had appointed a commission last February to study Information Technology deployment in New Hampshire. The Governor released their results last week and it can be located on the Governor's website. That plan will be the guiding principles we work from. Administrative Services has an RFP out now to do a statewide IT plan. It is oriented around the six areas of government in New Hampshire, including Transportation, Health and Human Services, Public Safety, Justice, Education and Environment. They feel it would be easier to share with municipalities if it is all one plan rather than trying to figure out which agency is doing what.

Ms. Little mentioned that our project is listed in the plan, not ranked, but is one that fulfills the Governor's desire to provide services electronically to the citizens of New Hampshire. It really seems to be getting a lot of good press and that is what we need to impress upon these people. Ms. Little informed Mr. Armstrong of the "grass roots" efforts to garner support for the web enablement money being placed back into the House budget. Mr. Armstrong added that as we move into E-Government, providing electronic services to our citizens, we will be under added pressure to ensure we have clean data.

Ms. Little informed the committee that Eric Herr of the IT Commission will be presenting the commission's findings on two different occasions. He will present next Wednesday at 8:30 for the NH Council on Applied Technology which is chaired by Representative Nada Cain and will also appear March 23 before NH LoGIN, a fairly new affiliate group of NHMA. LoGIN is made up of Municipal officials from many of our 234 communities. They found it necessary to form as NHMA desired to coordinate technology among its members by looking at standards and interoperability between state IT systems. Ms. Little believes that eventually NHMA will be so involved with this that they may even need to hire support staff.

She went on to say that the formation of stakeholder teams might have been insufficient. It didn't have the full broad spectrum of what a municipality's concerns would be with a piece of technology coming down from the state. On the VRV2000 project we were lucky, as our stakeholders were funeral directors and the hospitals. When you come to DMV and the revenue stream that will be diverted to the state, that will be a real concern to financial officers and managers. The problem is, the clerks are not responsible for watching out for the revenue stream and they may not have the technical experience to confront the state regarding such issues. NH LoGIN will be made up of a variety of experts and they are whom the state will approach with new initiatives. If anyone is interested in joining NH LoGIN, they can be found at the NHMA website. They are listed under Professional Organizations, and you can join online. Ms. Little thinks that the state IT report is the first step in the right direction and we really need to have municipal folks stop complaining about the state and step up to the table and take responsibility.

The committee took a short break to wait for Mr. Dupee.

Mr. Dupee began by introducing himself and explaining his duties. He began by saying that there are two budgets out there. One is the Governor's budget, which includes \$750,000 for the web enablement of VRV and that is the budget the department supports. Those monies do not appear in the House budget and that is the budget the department is opposing. Chairman Kurk has said that what he has proposed is not the final word, which indicates there is room for discussion, negotiation and input. Ms. Little asked about the

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Governor's budget. Mr. Dupee explained that it has been introduced to the House and they are basically ignoring hers, preferring instead to create their own. They took her budget and rolled back expenses to the year 2000 and adjusted for some population changes but then knocked out a lot of other activities. He added that Vital Records is not the only program having to fight for their funding. There are about seven pages of items that have been wiped out.

The budget hearing for OCPH will be held this Saturday morning at nine a.m. at the LOB. Katie Dunn will be there to argue why the funding is needed. Ms. Little asked if Commissioner Shumway will bring up the Vital Records web enablement. Mr. Dupee said they will compare the two budgets and as they go down the list of differences, they will have the opportunity to speak on the items that have been removed. Ms. Little asked the difference between Division III and the full committee. Mr. Dupee replied that each committee forms subcommittees on important pieces of legislation.

The Finance committee is very formal, it has divisions and each division has state agencies that they oversee. Division III considers the Health and Human Services budget. The chair is Rep. Emerton. Mr. Dupee said the full House generally votes with the subcommittee. Ms. Little thanked Mr. Dupee for his report.

Next meeting May 17, 2001

Seeing no other business the meeting adjourned at 11:20 a.m.