

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

*To The New Hampshire Department of State*

***-MINUTES-***

***Thursday  
February 28, 2008***

# Approved Minutes

## **-MINUTES-**

### **Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting**

February 28, 2008

Archives Building  
Conference Room  
71 South Fruit Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

#### ***COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:***

Jill Hadaway, Bow Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar  
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment  
Peter Croteau, OIT CIO Appointment  
Patricia Little, Keene City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment – **Via Telephone**  
Kimberly Johnson, Henniker Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment  
Debbie Augustine, NH Hospital Association Appointment  
Anna Thomas, Manchester Deputy Public Health Officer, DHHS Appointment  
David Pollard, Funeral Director Association Appointment

#### ***COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:***

Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment  
Dr. David Laflamme, Data User, DHHS Appointment  
Doug Hall, Vital Records User, DHHS Appointment  
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist  
Carol Johnson, Manchester City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment

#### ***GUESTS:***

Tom Manning, Assistant Secretary of State  
Melanie A. Orman, Vital Records, SOS  
Barbara Kostka, Vital Records, SOS  
Steve Wurtz, Vital Records, SOS

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## Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

### 1. Meeting Called to Order:

- Ms. Hadaway called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. She explained that Dr. Laflamme, Mr. Hall, and Dr. Mevers would not be attending the meeting.

### 2. Approval of Minutes:

- Dr. Mevers requested that the September minutes be corrected and resubmitted for approval January 17, 2008 meeting. Because that meeting had been postponed the committee would address them at this meeting. Ms. Hadaway asked if anyone wished to comment on the minutes. Mr. Allan made a motion to accept the corrected September minutes. Mr. Bolton seconded. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.
- Minutes for Thursday, November 29, 2007. Committee members expressed appreciation for the new compressed minutes format. Dr. Laflamme asked via email that mention be made in the minutes that he inquired about the status of the out-of-state births at the meeting. Ms. Orman agreed to add mention of it. Mr. Allan made a motion to accept the minutes with that correction. Ms. Little seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to accept the minutes with Dr. Laflamme's correction.

### 3. New Member:

- Mr. Bolton introduced Ms. Anna Thomas, Community Epidemiologist for the City of Manchester to the committee. Ms. Thomas had been appointed by DHHS as the municipal vital records data user to fill the position vacated by Mr. Fred Ruscsek. Ms. Thomas explained to the committee that she was the Deputy Public Health Officer for the City of Manchester and felt she had big shoes to fill.

### 4. Grant Program Update:

Ms. Hadaway explained that the agenda was going to be changed around a little. Since Dr. Teschner had recently and unexpectedly left his position, Mr. Tom Manning was going to attend the meeting in his place to report to the committee on the status of the grant program and he had other appointments that were planned previously.

- Mr. Manning reported that Dr. Teschner had officially handed off the project to him the day before, but that he had been "unofficially" working on it for several weeks. Dr. Teschner had not been aware that Mr. Manning had already begun updating the spreadsheet and proceeded to remove all the data from the drive where Mr. Manning had accessed it. Luckily, they were able to retrieve/restore it.
- Mr. Manning reported that he wanted to check on some of the conservation work as some vendors were taking a long time to respond and he wanted to ensure that the work was complete. He also reported that he had approved a final check for the city of Keene.

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- Mr. Manning asked the committee how they wanted the ten late applicants to the program to be handled. Ms. Hadaway explained that the committee had decided to hold off on any action on those applications until it had a better idea of the budget and future expenses. She told him that the committee had no immediate plans to act on those applications. Mr. Manning concluded his presentation.
- Ms. Hadaway distributed a handout explaining that four years earlier a job description had been created for the grant coordinator position and she hoped to move back in that direction with Dr. Teschner's replacement. Mr. Manning replied that he had not been made aware of any plans for hiring a replacement yet.
- Ms. Little asked if there was a position within the SOS with the title of Grant Administrator or was it going to be a contractor? Mr. Bolton and Mr. Manning replied that there was not a position with that title. Mr. Bolton thought it was initially going to be a VRIF funded position within Vital Records, but things had changed over time. Mr. Manning replied that he was not prepared to discuss the Grant Administrator position. This project had only recently been given to him. Ms. Little agreed with Ms. Hadaway that the program needed to return to its original goal, education.

After Mr. Scanlan arrived, Ms. Hadaway expressed the committee's desire to post Dr. Teschner's position as it was originally envisioned. Mr. Scanlan replied that he wanted to discuss the matter with Secretary Gardner first and then they could possibly meet with Ms. Hadaway to discuss it further.

### **5. OIT Budget Discussion:**

- Mr. Croteau introduced Ms. Barbara Barton, new Business Analyst for NHVRIN. Since Ms. Goonan's departure Ms. Barton had stepped in to become the primary contact for Vital Records.
- Ms. Barton will be handling the project plan until a replacement for Ms. Goonan is found. Ms. Goonan's position was 75% funded by the General Fund and is subject to the freeze. Because of that, Mr. Croteau was unsure as to how long it would take to replace her. With committee support OIT could put in a waiver letter. He explained that at that time he had approximately twelve vacant positions and there were not a lot of applicants out there.
- Mr. Croteau reported that OIT had done a NHVRIN mini release February 6, 2008, but had not yet scheduled the next release.
- A significant amount of time had been spent working on the NHVRIN fax problem to physician certifiers. They (OIT) believed they had found the problem and only had one more test to do before releasing it into the production environment.
- Mr. Croteau reported that Mr. Bolton had suggested that they use an outside vendor to assist while they worked on the fax problem because three weeks can often stretch into months. Mr. Croteau added that this might not be a bad idea.

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- Mr. Croteau reported that OIT would be interviewing to fill Mr. Bruner's vacant SDS-V position. It is not funded through the General Fund and can be filled without a waiver.
- The NHVRIN OIT team is currently short two positions and Mr. Croteau pointed out that his team often had a difficult time with all of the different aspects of the vital records applications when it was fully staffed. Because of the staff shortage they are currently recommending smaller releases (every 4-6 weeks) rather than trying to do large three month releases.
- Ms. Hadaway asked for an estimate of how long it would be before OIT was again fully staffed to handle the NHVRIN workload. Mr. Croteau estimated 2-4 months depending on the type of talent they are able to attract for the SDS-V position. Mr. Wurtz stated that he was sympathetic, but wanted to stress the statutory deficiency Vital Records was juggling without the fax capability being functional. He felt it was important that the committee make a decision about the direction OIT should take.
- Mr. Croteau reported that Mr. Bruner was working on debugging the fax issue almost exclusively.
- Ms. Barton reported that the next big release would be the same sex birth registration module, which was currently in the request/evaluation and business requirement phase. She explained that she described the release as "big" because it would impact the entire NHVRIN system. Mr. Wurtz reminded the committee that this was another legislatively mandated change to the system. Ms Barton agreed and added that her team had only received the project two weeks earlier.
- Ms. Barton distributed a handout describing projects in the OIT queue in addition to Mr. Bolton's requirements. The out-of-state birth record data entry module was in Integration testing. Documentation and infrastructure was expected to be complete by April 1, 2008. NHVRINWeb had gone live. OIT staff are working toward having a development environment where they can do changes, fixes and enhancements.
- Developers in OIT are moving to a new environment to do their .NET development. It would not affect the day to day operational issues that occur.
- Mr. Allan asked if Ms. Barton could describe the status of Visual Basic Studio in terms of training. When would the committee realize improvements in productivity? Ms. Barton replied that she could not answer that question. Mr. Croteau replied that with the staff shortage there is a lot of training required and other things routinely get pushed back.
- Mr. Pollard informed the committee he would support hiring an outside vendor to speed the registration of all certifying physicians if necessary. Only 25% of physicians and ARNPs were registered as of the date of this meeting. Remove this issue from OIT's shoulders so they can devote their time to getting the NHVRIN system up and running.
- Mr. Bolton explained to Mr. Croteau and the committee that until a fix is established, he would be willing to have Vital Records staff manually fax the notices (approx. 15 per day) to physicians as long as the fix is imminent. Mr. Croteau reported that they hoped to have it completed in at most, two months. Mr. Bolton did not prefer a third

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party. A third party vendor would still take Mr. Bruner away from his regular assignment as development would have to be done to enable a third party to do the fix.

- Mr. Wurtz explained that he did not think Mr. Pollard meant to go out and find a new vendor, but to take advantage of outside vendors that OIT was already working with. Just give the whole problem to them to work out rather than bits and pieces. Ms. Barton asked about having the funeral director do the faxing themselves. Mr. Wurtz and Mr. Bolton replied that the funeral directors would not have access to the fax notification form nor the fax/contact information for the physicians.
- Mr. Wurtz explained that the legislation was passed to end the practice of funeral directors having to chase down physicians to complete death records. Mr. Croteau suggested devoting 100% of Mr. Bruner's time to this project. Mr. Bolton replied that Mr. Bruner had been tasked with this project for the last few months and he was not confident in the amount of progress that had been made thus far.
- It was mutually agreed that Vital Records staff would fax the notification to physicians until a fix was in place, rather than introduce a whole new group of people to these confidential documents. Mr. Croteau explained that they do have the fix working in a test environment and do not expect it to take much longer to complete.
- Mr. Bolton and Ms. Barton agreed that database administrators would put a temporary solution in place to notify Vital Records when a funeral director tried to notify a certifier, so they could handle the work around. Mr. Pollard withdrew his motion. He explained that the funeral directors were having as much trouble convincing their own to get training for the new way of certifying death as Vital Records was getting physicians to sign up.

### **6. OIT Statewide Information Technology Plan:**

- Mr. Bolton explained that he had met with Rebecca Bolton of Agency Support and Planning. Ms. Bolton is head of the division that formulates the statewide IT plans. She asked if Vital Records wanted to be included in the planning process. Mr. Bolton replied that he was interested. Ms. Bolton shared a template she had for an agency IT plan. He felt it would be beneficial for Vital Records to have a part in that process.

### **7. Vital Records RFP:**

- Mr. Bolton reported that the RFP for the OIT evaluation with MRI was modified to make the risk of contracting with the state a shared risk between MRI and Vital Records. He was hoping to have Mr. Scanlan take a look at the final version and in the meantime had forwarded it to MRI for signatures. He felt it would be fully signed within the week and MRI could begin their work the following week. Mr. Bolton expected MRI to report their findings approximately three months from the date they begin work.

### **8. Other Business:**

- Ms. Little made a motion that the schedule of meetings of the VRIFAC change from

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bi-monthly to a quarterly basis. Members agreed that at the request of the Chair “Special” meetings could be scheduled when pressing issues arise. Mr. Scanlan seconded the motion and the committee voted unanimously to amend their meeting schedule to reflect quarterly meetings.

- Ms. Hadaway asked those in attendance to take a moment to introduce themselves to the newest member of the committee, Ms. Thomas.

### **9. Action Items:**

1. Amend meeting schedule, next meeting May 15, 2008
2. OIT complete the fix for the certifying physician fax issue
3. Out-of-state birth module complete by April 1, 2008
4. Grant Administrator position

Mr. Allan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Pollard seconded.  
Meeting adjourned.