

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
January 19, 2006***

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

January 19, 2006

N.H. Department of Resource and Economic Development
Conference Room
Pembroke Road
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Paul Bergeron, Nashua City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
Jill Hadaway, Bow Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
David Kruger, Public Member Appointment
Andrew Chalsma, Health Statistics, DHHS Appointment
Kimberly Johnson, Henniker Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Joseph Gray, Rochester Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Doug Hall, Vital Records User, DHHS Appointment
Peter Croteau, OIT, OIT Appointment
Judy Gaouette, Dover City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment
Debbie Augustine, NH Hospital Association
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment
Bob Lambert, Peterborough Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Fred Rusczek, Manchester Health Officer, DHHS Appointment
David Pollard, Funeral Director Appointment

GUESTS:

Melanie A. Orman, Vital Records, SOS
Barbara Kostka, Vital Records, SOS
Jackie Goonan, OIT
Steve Wurtz, Vital Records, SOS

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

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1. Meeting Called to Order:

Mr. Bergeron called the meeting to order and explained that he was going to take one item from the agenda out of order. He then informed the committee that he would be leaving the committee after having served two plus terms. State law requires that a member serve no more than two consecutive terms on the committee. Mr. Bergeron introduced Mr. Gray, City Clerk of Rochester who had been appointed by the City & Town Clerk Association as his replacement. Mr. Bergeron asked all those in attendance to introduce themselves to Mr. Gray. After that was complete, Mr. Bergeron suggested that the committee return to the written agenda.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Mr. Bergeron stated that the first order of business was to go over the minutes from the previous meeting. That meeting occurred way back in September of 2005. He then asked if members had read the minutes and if they had any corrections or additions to those minutes. Hearing no discussion of corrections or additions, he asked for a motion to accept the minutes. Mr. Kruger offered a motion to accept and Ms. Gaouette seconded his motion. Mr. Bergeron asked for a vote and the minutes were unanimously accepted as written by the committee.

3. Mr. Bergeron's parting words:

Mr. Bergeron asked that before the committee began working on selecting and voting on a new Chairperson for the committee, they allow him a few minutes to make some parting comments while he still had control of the gavel. He explained that he had begun his involvement in government approximately eleven years ago when he went to work as Deputy Clerk in the city of Manchester. Prior to that he had worked in the retail industry, both for family owned businesses and seven years for Filenes. When he began working for Manchester it was before City Hall had been renovated and it was a mess. It was often necessary to cover PCs when it rained. Cover was necessary because the rain blew in through closed windows. He recalled one incident when ceiling tiles became waterlogged and fell to the ground around customers waiting for their birth certificates.

Mr. Bergeron remembered Manchester City Clerk Leo Bernier asking what he felt was the biggest difference between working in the private sector versus public service. He explained that when he worked in the family business, if the roof leaked they could fix it that day. When he worked for Filenes it might have taken forty-eight hours to have repairs made, but working for government it seemed to take one-hundred years to have anything done. He then explained that over the last few years on this committee that feeling returned. Things do not and have not happened as quickly as he would like.

Mr. Bergeron reminded the committee that he had shared a report with them that he had given to the clerk's association the year before. There were a half dozen issues he wished had been resolved over the last few years and he did not want to step off the committee without at least trying to bring some of them a little closer to resolution. Recently, he had approached the Secretary of State for a meeting to discuss some of his concerns. Several clerks attended the meeting with Mr. Bergeron and Mr. Gardner. They had spent an hour

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and a half with Mr. Gardner and Mr. Bergeron explained that they were only able to “pin him down” on two of the items that they were particularly concerned about.

The first item was trying to get the position for the Vital Records Preservation Program Administrator filled. Mr. Bergeron stated that those that have been on the committee for some time might remember that back in 2003, then member Armstrong and several other members of the committee pushed that a long-term business plan be developed on ways that the fund can be used for its intended purpose. One of those purposes was to assist communities in managing and preserving their local records.

The key piece to this plan was the Program Administrator position. Someone that could do field studies, hold workshops and coordinate a grant program. In March of 2004 this committee voted to recommend that this position be filled. As of this date the position had not been filled or advertised. Mr. Bergeron reported that Mr. Gardner committed to filling the position by July 2006 and he wanted the committee to be aware of that commitment and that it is reflected in the meeting minutes.

The second piece that Mr. Bergeron brought up to Mr. Gardner was the need for better financial reports. That issue had been particularly frustrating to Mr. Bergeron over the past year or two. The committee had only received very general line items that might say “Equipment Purchased \$106,000” and the committee had no understanding of what the detail was.

Mr. Bergeron reminded long time members of the committee of the caliber of the reports that they received in 2000 through 2002. In those reports they would at least get some kind of explanation like the “Equipment Purchased” was rollout PCs, annual replacement PCs, new servers, etc. At least the committee had known where some of the money was going. Mr. Bergeron stated that Mr. Gardner had promised to look into it to try and improve the committee’s financial reports. How long that would take, Mr. Bergeron did not know.

Mr. Bergeron stated that he hoped the committee would continue to push for better reports if in two months things remained the same. He felt it was the committee’s right to ask for more information. Adding that he realized this committee was just advisory in nature only and in the end the Secretary can make decisions as he sees fit about the expenditure of the funds, but he felt that they also have a responsibility to share information and disclose how the funds are being used. Mr. Bergeron hoped that these issues were moving toward some kind of closure or resolution.

4. Election of a New Chair:

Mr. Bergeron asked if there were any nominations for Chair of the Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee. Ms. Gaouette stated that she wanted to nominate Mr. Gray to be Chair. Mr. Bergeron asked if there were any additional nominations. Hearing none he asked the committee if there were any additional motions. Ms. Hadaway made a motion to close nominations. Mr. Bergeron asked the committee for a vote on Ms. Gaouette’s nomination. The committee unanimously voted to close nominations and then to elect Mr. Gray as Chairperson for the coming year. Mr. Bergeron passed Mr. Gray the gavel so he could conduct the rest of the meeting.

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Mr. Gray thanked Mr. Bergeron and stated to the committee that he was aware that it was uncommon for the new member to become the chair. He explained that he had been clerk in Rochester for four years and had been a little reluctant to participate in state events until this time as he wanted to thoroughly learn his job before venturing out of Rochester. He felt that The Vital Records Improvement Fund was a worthwhile cause and he looks forward to working with the committee. With the federal government cracking down on the issuing of vital records, Mr. Gray was of the opinion that there would be a much greater focus on them in the coming years.

5. Rollout Status:

Mr. Bolton stated that before that agenda item was addressed he wanted to present Mr. Bergeron with a token of the committee's appreciation for all the time and effort he has put in with the Vital Records Improvement Advisory Committee. Mr. Bergeron asked if it was one of the new heirloom birth certificates. Mr. Bergeron thanked the committee for the unexpected surprise.

Mr. Bolton reported that as far as the rollout status, they have completed the rollout of the NHVRIN software and broadband connectivity to 201 sites. There are 33 sites yet to go. They have been struggling over the last several months to find solutions to procuring broadband or the advisability of whether they should do that for the remaining towns. There have been many expensive solutions, but they only recently found a much more affordable solution. It is a satellite solution. There are two companies, Directway and Wild Blue. Wild Blue is just beginning to market in New Hampshire. They came over from Vermont in November of 2005. They have very good service in terms of basic service that would supply enough connectivity for clerks to do business with NHVRIN.

With Directway the cost for the installation was very high. Approximately \$1400 per site. So Wild Blue is looking at \$380 per site for installation and approximately \$70 per month per site for service. Mr. Bolton reminded the committee that they had previously approved a T1 lines for five sites which was never done. Mr. Bolton added that it was a good thing they had not as it would cost about \$400 per site per month. He felt that they were putting all their eggs in one basket and hoped to get some guidance from the committee on the advisability of doing it and for them to indicate to him whether to go ahead or not.

Ms. Gaouette asked what the monthly cost of the alternative was. Mr. Bolton replied that Directway was the solution that they had piloted in Easton and that it did not work out very well. Grafton has had success with Directway, but the fund paid the installation cost and the monthly cost for Directway for what we provide is \$69.99 per month. Wild Blue's monthly cost for the same service is \$69.95, and we would save \$1000. per site in installation costs. Ms. Gaouette asked if Wild Blue was a relatively new company. Mr. Bolton replied that they were a Colorado based company and he had done some research on customer satisfaction and found that Directway and Wild Blue were ranked about the same.

Mr. Kruger asked if Mr. Bolton could back up and explain some things to him. He asked what percentage of records filed did those 33 outstanding towns account for per year and what percentage did the 201 already connected cities and towns account for? He added that he expected it to be a very small number for the 33 towns yet to be hooked up. Mr. Bolton replied that the 201 cities and towns probably account for 95-98% of the records

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filed annually. Mr. Kruger asked him to be more specific as there was a big difference between 95-98%. He stated that if it was only 95% he thought the committee should spend the money, but if it was 99% then he felt the committee might want to think of other alternatives to \$70. per month.

Mr. Kruger stated that he also wanted to know how many vital records that percentage pertained to because he wanted to know how much each of those records were going to cost per record to have the town hooked up to broadband. Mr. Kruger suggested that the committee might find that it is much cheaper to put it on pony express rather than electronic. Even hand carrying to a nearby town where they can be entered would be cheaper. How much would each record cost when the installation and monthly cost of the satellite solution were figured in?

Mr. Kruger felt this information was important as it was difficult for the committee to make a financial judgment when they did not understand the nature of the beast. Mr. Kruger asked Mr. Wurtz to give him some ballpark numbers. Mr. Wurtz replied that they were probably only looking at about 250 records annually that these towns would provide to the state. Mr. Kruger asked if that was per town or total for all 33. Mr. Wurtz replied that it would be total for all 33. Mr. Kruger asked how many records the state processes in total each year. Mr. Wurtz replied that we do 40,000. to 45,000. per year.

Mr. Kruger stated that they were then talking about less than 1% of the records for the state. He felt that the cost per record was astronomical. Mr. Hall stated that he figured that would be about \$100. per record. Mr. Bolton replied that the 250 figure Mr. Wurtz had supplied was number of events, not the number of certificates issued. He felt it was important that residents of those towns be able to go to their town clerk to get a copy of a birth certificate rather than having to travel to another town to do so. Mr. Kruger stated that he did not think that justified the expense of providing broadband service to those towns. He felt that was “the downside of living in the boonies.”

Mr. Kruger was not sure that we should be spending our money this way, but wanted to hear other members’ opinions. Mr. Kruger stated that as much as he would like to see everyone doing their records electronically, at some point you reach the point of diminishing returns and he felt that we have hit it. Ms. Hadaway replied that if we are just looking at monetary value here then Mr. Kruger was correct. She went on to say if we are looking at the convenience for the residents of that community, the clerks of those towns to be able to have access, the state department to be able to put all those records together and to know that every town has access and the advantages that will bring, then it is a different story.

Mr. Kruger replied that he understood everything that Ms. Hadaway was saying and that he agreed to a point. At some point we have to decide how much do we cross-subsidize the convenience of a very few people in this state. He admitted that he was not sure that he was definitely against this plan yet. He wanted to be sure that the committee has it on the table and is sure of what it is doing. It did strike him that we would be spending a large sum of money for very few people.

Ms. Orman stated that she had only been attending VRIFAC meetings for 5 years, but from the beginning each time this issue had come up, the whole purpose of VRV2000/NHVRIN was to level the playing field for all clerks. They all contribute to the VRIF and should all see the benefit. She added that putting the clerks on the system

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would allow them to begin generating revenue for their towns as well bring revenue to the state. Mr. Gray recognized Ms. Gaouette. She explained that Ms. Orman had said what she was planning to say, that is was the mission of NHVRIN to have everyone on board.

Mr. Gray added that he shared Mr. Kruger's concern, but also felt that by putting those clerks on NHVRIN we might see their volume might increase as word spread that records were available locally. He felt that those clerks might increase their customer base as word spread that you did not have to travel out of town to get your birth, marriage, or death certificates. Mr. Kruger replied that listening to the numbers it would appear that each of the sites would be doing only twelve records per year, not ten per month.

Mr. Wurtz stated that he felt there were several points that needed to be in the mix. The first was the commitment made to the clerks when the concept of an automated system first initiated. It was a system designed for the ease of all cities and towns and to possibly increase revenue in some of the smaller communities, allowing them to do business in a way they had not previously been able to. If the clerks had that benefit then the citizens of their city or town would also benefit. We cannot discount the integrity of the documents we are issuing.

If records are pulled from the central database than we, the Division of Vital Records Administration don't have to worry about the town of XYZ being badgered into fixing a record that really should not be fixed. We all know these records should not be fixed, but there are people out there that will push and push and maybe a community that is not as well versed in why we do what we do could be convinced to do so. In New Hampshire we hold very high the integrity of the records we maintain and issue.

The committee just cannot lose that fact. Mr. Hall stated that he could see both sides of this issue and he felt that the question before the committee is what the purpose of the system is? He felt that had been a sticking point all along. Whether the system is there to satisfying the needs of city and town clerks or for a broader public and to the extent that it is serving the interest of each of the communities than putting them all on the system might make sense, but he felt that at the minimum before the committee goes forward, the cost should be reflected in the record.

Mr. Hall's quick calculation was \$25,000 annually. That is without dealing with amortization, installation, etc. You then need to look at the number of records generated by these towns. If there are only 250 generated then you are talking about \$100 per record. He wanted that to be on the record in case anyone ever questions it later they will know the committee was aware of the cost.

Mr. Kruger added that they would be sending upwards of 10% of the records we do every year. He stated that he would support such a move as long as the committee went into it with their eyes open. Ms. Hadaway asked Mr. Croteau what MAAP was doing for these small communities. What was the plan to get them on? Mr. Croteau explained that they had encountered the same issues during the MAAP project. For those that were not familiar with MAAP it was the new motor vehicle software that they are deploying to towns for registration and titles. Before MAAP came in there was an existing system that was connected to some 80 towns.

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About 68 of those were connected by a lease line circuit from the telephone company which cost about \$115. per month to the Department of Safety. There were 12 that were connected by a traditional dial up connection, which, these days is significantly slower. As they implemented MAAP they decided that everyone should have a frame circuit or leased line from the telephone company. The dial-up lines were too slow. It had nothing to do with MAAP per say, but it is just the nature of the quality you get when you use dial up service. In a nutshell, the Department of Safety continues to pay \$115. per line per month.

They will continue to install frame circuits for new towns. There are approximately 60-70 cities and towns signed up at this point. When confronting the question during the design of MAAP they asked Commissioner Flynn his opinion on smaller towns, less volume and cost per transaction. With Motor Vehicle even a small town with only 500 residents can expect 500 registrations done in a given year, along with changes of address, etc. Mr. Croteau pointed out it was interesting hearing the discussion as to whether the system was for the clerk's benefit or the citizen's.

After working for Commissioner Flynn for seven years, Mr. Croteau explained that he (Flynn) is always looking to maximizing the customer's experience at the counter. Not to say that he does not want the clerk to have ease of use with the system. That is why they invite a full customer base of stakeholders when they design a new system at the Department of Safety. That being said, Mr. Flynn decided that all cities and towns should be treated equally. Just because a town is smaller and has less transactions that others they should not be treated any differently.

Mr. Flynn is of the opinion that all clerks should be able to offer the same service and citizens should have access to all the same services no matter the size of their community. Mr. Croteau added that there is the raw transaction cost which from a financial standpoint is a major factor, but you have to look at the full customer service value of being able to serve customers. Being able to answer a resident's question even though a transaction may not take place adds a great deal of value. They also decided to upgrade the twelve dial-up towns as the wait for transactions for customers was too long.

Mr. Gray asked Mr. Croteau if they only had twelve towns on dial-up how were the others high speed? Mr. Bolton replied that "high speed" was relative. What their system will function properly on and what NHVRIN will function properly on are two different things. Mr. Kruger added that he thought he had heard Mr. Croteau say that they still had 50-75 towns that still had no connection. Mr. Croteau explained that he was correct. That was not a factor of the data communications. They had just not rolled it all the way out yet.

Mr. Croteau explained that the frame relay lines are all 56K and so are the dial up lines, but because the towns are remote and line quality is not always good the dial-up lines can be considerably less than 56K. The lowest speed the MAAP program has encountered is 21 to 24K particularly in the northern Coos towns. Motor vehicle feels that is too slow. The "better" dial-up towns were getting 33K. That is a big difference to go to 56K so that is the way they decided to go. Mr. Wurtz stated that NHVRIN would not operate on a 56K service.

Mr. Bolton added that he understood that there was another relay that was being pursued by Colonel Booth that was 1.2 Mg or something like that. Mr. Croteau explained that the

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State Police have high speed connections to six State Police barracks around the state and they are upgrading them. They will not allow cities and towns to be put on those lines. They have to be separate networks for motor vehicle registrations. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Croteau if the MAAP program would be interested in sharing bandwidth with NHVRIN if we went ahead and rolled out to those 33 towns still outstanding. Mr. Croteau replied that he believed they would be interested.

Mr. Gray stated that this project would benefit those towns even more by enabling other state services to come to their location as well as vital records. Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Bolton if he was aware of any problems with MAAP and NHVRIN sharing connectivity in the future as they had in the past. Mr. Bolton replied that we would have the equipment at the sites, but Motor Vehicle would still have to bring their frame and provide training. Mr. Bolton added that in recent history VRV2000 used a client server and there was a bank of toll-free lines that clerks would call in to. Part of the justification of moving to a web enabled system was the communication costs associated with that system. At one point the fund was paying \$40,000 per month for communication costs.

Mr. Bolton felt that even though this expense seemed high, it was much less than what was expended in the past. Mr. Kruger stated that he felt that the discussion about this topic had been good and he felt better about it. Mr. Kruger suggested that the committee endorse the proposal to continue rolling out the NHVRIN software to every city and town in the state. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Kruger if he wanted to make that a motion. Mr. Kruger replied that he would. Mr. Bolton seconded Mr. Kruger's motion and the committee voted unanimously to recommend that Mr. Bolton continue with the rollout to those 33 isolated communities.

6. NHVRIN Update:

Mr. Croteau informed the committee that he had asked Mr. Bolton for a little time during this meeting to outline some changes that they (OIT) had made. He asked Mr. Bolton if he (Mr. Croteau) had been officially put on the committee in place of Mr. O'Neal. Mr. Bolton replied that he had. Mr. Croteau reported that although Mr. O'Neal had moved on to other projects he would still be helping out occasionally. Mr. Croteau's role would be to provide oversight along with Ms. Goonan.

Ms. Goonan's position had been elevated to that of primary Project Manager. She would be managing the systems analysts and programming staff associated with the NHVRIN application. Mr. O'Neal would still be working on the budgeting for the application support and maintenance and assist in hiring. He will work with Ms. Goonan in an advisory role. Mr. Croteau explained that his background is mainly in mainframe and mini computers, but he plans to familiarize himself with the NHVRIN application. He asked the committee to bear with him as he does so. They would continue to utilize the DBAs and other resources from OIT.

Mr. Croteau informed the committee that Ms. Way has also been redirected to other projects in OIT. Mr. Croteau explained that part of the reason for the personnel changes was cost factors. There is a certain amount of money allocated for resources and they had to trim down the staff some. Mr. Croteau's position is Director of Agency Software so he is billed across numerous agencies. Some of the things his staff has discussed with Mr. Bolton and his staff during meetings has been relative to the amount of work at hand.

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There are 80-90 backlogged change requests at any given time. That number fluctuates as change requests are added and completed.

There are other tasks that they are working on that are not specifically associated with NHVRIN that many members see as customers of the online system. Some of those they work on themselves and others they work on with outside consultants. There are also the periodic releases that they work on. Mr. Croteau stated that Mr. Bolton had made it clear that he finds this backlog of 80-90 change requests unacceptable and he would like to see them cleared up and completed. Mr. Croteau explained that this is a common problem in the first few years of a new application. There is generally a considerable backlog as people become more familiar with the system.

Mr. Croteau explained that OIT has a limited amount of resources and he is agreeable with seeking additional resources if Mr. Bolton wanted to fund them or bring in outside consultants to cover any change request backlog the OIT staff cannot handle. Mr. Croteau added that they also have the option of trying to secure additional OIT resources, but that is not easily accomplished. They have been an organization for some two and a half years now and are still building their infrastructure and many of their resources are being used for that so it can be difficult finding free resources. He reiterated that they would work with Mr. Bolton over the next several releases and would then determine whether or not they should seek the assistance of private consultants.

If they do hire outside contractors Mr. Croteau suggested that they would put them under Ms. Goonan's leadership. He explained that OIT relies on Mr. Bolton to set priorities. OIT does not like to set priorities. They will make recommendations, but it is up to the customer to set priorities. Some of the OIT strengths Mr. Croteau wanted to tell the committee about was a very well defined backlog to work on. They do not have it all estimated yet and Mr. Bolton has asked that they do that.

Mr. Croteau felt that was a good idea because if you cannot see what you are managing you cannot manage it. They are going to try and give estimates to each of the tasks so they can come up with an end date when they plan to have them all the change requests completed. That will also help them to determine if and how much additional help they need. Ms. Goonan is very good at preparing and updating formal project plans and keeping them updated. Her plans are more on a shorter time frame basis, as in the next release or other side projects. This allows them to balance their staff and give Mr. Bolton predictable end dates. As they build the estimates for all of the change requests they will keep Mr. Bolton up to date.

They meet with Mr. Bolton and his staff frequently so they can provide their expectations and OIT can report on progress. Mr. Bolton also meets with technical staff on a regular basis. Mr. Croteau asked if there were any questions before he turned it over to Ms. Goonan. Ms. Hadaway asked if there was priorities set for the backlog of change requests and how those priorities are arrived at. Is it the items with the most complaints received? Mr. Croteau replied that he has always put the responsibility of outlining priorities with the customer. They are the ones that have to explain to their customers why things are not fixed.

There are certain exceptions to this, such as when there is a production problem. When that happens, they obviously have to fix that problem. When they are doing that if there is a change request that can be fixed relatively easily while they are working in that area

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they will often go ahead without seeking permission from the customer every time. He felt it was very important to speak with Mr. Bolton about every detail as he has found working with him that he wants to be involved in all the details of this application.

Mr. Kruger stated that no matter what business you are in when speaking of a backlog you need to keep your eye on the aging of that backlog to see if there are some that are no longer necessary. He admitted he had no idea what the list looked like, but felt that it needs to be kept up with. Mr. Croteau replied that he encourages customers to look at this type of list at least once a year and weed out obsolete items. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Croteau at what point do they consider outsourcing to get the backlog caught up. Mr. Croteau replied that Mr. Bolton would have to determine that because there would be a funding issue and he would need to decide how much pain his customer is feeling. In his dealings with MAAP

Mr. Croteau explained that he was more acutely aware of the customer's pain because he was out there dealing with them. In this situation Mr. Bolton interacts regularly with the customer and can better ascertain the urgency of change requests in the pipeline. Mr. Croteau asked Mr. Bolton if he had not asked for the backlog to be completed within a year. Mr. Bolton replied that he had asked that it be done within six months. Mr. Croteau stated that he felt comfortable saying that he did not think his staff could complete all the outstanding change requests in that time frame. In order to even give Mr. Bolton an estimate of how long it would take to complete the requests Mr. Croteau needed to pull some of Ms. Goonan's team to do the analysis and that would further slow the process. He explained that in the IT business estimating is not an easy task.

Mr. Croteau pointed out that this situation is not unique. Many of the state applications are in the same boat. Everyone needs additional resources. Mr. Bolton replied that while we may be in the same boat it does not necessarily have to be this way. He felt that we have the capability to throw money at the project to clean up the backlog. He added that the change requests were not addressing enhancements or upgrades. They were for fixes to identified problems with the application. Mr. Kruger asked if any of the change requests could be outdated or no longer needed. Mr. Bolton replied that of the 80-90 requests, a few might be able to be knocked off, but not many.

Ms. Gaouette asked what it would take to spend additional money to bring down that number, a motion to outsource? Mr. Bolton replied that they had been discussing it awhile and it seemed that he kept hearing that it could not be done even if he threw additional monies at them. That they were unable to hire or assign additional staff and were giving us all the staff they could. If we needed more people we would have to go outside OIT. Mr. Croteau added that there are dynamic issues with hiring contractors. You have to watch and approve their work and that would require time from Ms. Goonan and probably one member of her team, putting additional strain on the resources.

Historically contractors have come in and they are running a business, trying to make a profit. They will sometimes come in and try to do the "quick and dirty," plug in the code and leave. That is why it is important that OIT staff familiar with the application stay on top of the work of outside contractors. Mr. Croteau added that just because it could put a strain on OIT he did not think we should run from the idea of outsourcing. We could possibly add one person at a time until the backlog is resolved. Mr. Croteau asked Ms. Goonan to present the NHVRIN update.

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Ms. Goonan distributed a handout (Appendix I) to those in attendance. She explained that she had been asked to provide an update on what her team is currently working on and she was also providing the release notes for the upcoming release. Ms. Goonan reported that her team's top priority was the 3.0 NHVRIN release scheduled for February 1, 2006 and it appears to be right on schedule. There are 16 change requests in that release and they are summarized in the handout. A part of this release is not just introducing new code and fixing broken items, but they are also modifying the infrastructure of NHVRIN. The web servers that we have are being upgraded to Windows 2003.

They did this because of the security updates of Windows 2003 and the stability of the operating system. There were issues with something called "Worker Process Recycling" that is a process in the web server and the net effect of it was users were being logged off for no reason. That problem will go away with this implementation. The other part of the infrastructure changes was the creation of a new server for training and user acceptance training (UAT).

This is very beneficial because previously that has been done on a server that is shared with the development team. That server is accessible outside the network and did pose some risk. This environment will be completely separate. Development and system testing on one server and training and UAT on its own dedicated server. Besides the infrastructure they are planning to continue with quarterly releases. With the new infrastructure they could probably do them more frequently. That can be done without any interruption of service. One server would stay up while the other was brought down and the changes added and then after putting the updated server back on line bringing down the one that needed to be updated while the new release seamlessly supported users.

They are also working with an outside vendor that is developing a product called NHVRIN WEB. OIT is providing infrastructure support and ultimately database support and maintenance of the application. That is in a transition phase right now. They also have plans to upgrade the Oracle database to 10G at some time. One of the smaller projects they support is NHVRIN Files. It is a client server application used by vital records to pull data out of NHVRIN for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

They (OIT) were also currently working on automating regression testing. Right now it is done primarily by Ms. Goonan with assistance from vital records staff. Ms. Goonan did not feel it was adequate for the size of the application. It is nearly impossible for one person to test everything in the application thoroughly. Automated regression testing will ensure that new releases will go out without bugs. It will be highly beneficial. The other priority for her staff is to complete as many change requests as possible. They have ten in the queue now that are in addition to the ones going out in February.

The biggest one of those is number 44 and is called "Town Clerk Access." It will allow city and town clerks to have access to the information they need and screens they need to enter and retrieve information from what we call their ancillary towns, i.e. Conway and North Conway. The other thing they are working on is a notification process through email or fax that is going to be enabled so that physicians and medical examiners will receive a notification directly from NHVRIN.

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Another thing Ms. Goonan wanted to comment on was the inability of the new operating system to work with Word files. There is a feature called query letters that are used by vital records staff to send out to physicians and others asking for additional information on a record. It is a security risk to put Word on a server and is absolutely impossible without disabling the security functions of Windows 2003. Ms. Goonan's team replaced all those documents using Crystal Reports, another software tool that is currently in use in the application. That change would be in effect in the February release. That was another fundamental change that had to be made in the application for this release. Her staff is also working on the new invoicing functionality for NHVRIN of linking of the DCN number with the transaction.

For the February release they have completely changed the way searching is done in the NHVRIN application and the Soundex feature is now operational. You can now search using the alias in the death module. Ms. Goonan was very excited to see that come out and thinks users will be pleased. They have also updated the Affidavit of Paternity and the parent notice. Ms. Goonan summarized by saying that it was quite a bit of work that they were able to put into this next release. She felt this release would probably have the greatest impact on users than any other has because of the increased functionality.

Mr. Wurtz stated that it will be the first time since we rolled out VRV2000 in 1998 that we have changed screens. The search screen will look completely different to users. He added that it was easier and cleaner than the previous screen. The user will no longer have a tab for the search and one for the requester. They have been combined and they require only minimal information (mandatory fields) to do the search. All the additional fields available before only seemed to cloud up the search. The clerk often felt they had to populate the fields and would then be unable to find the record. Another item Mr. Wurtz wanted to tell the committee about was the "Another Transaction" button.

The "Another Transaction" button does have its place in the application, but was more often than not, used incorrectly. When used incorrectly it is blowing users out of the transaction and leaving records hanging causing a great deal of frustration. They are disabling that button which will have minimal impact. The option will be modified for the future. With the coming of the accounting package it is important to minimize the number of records left hanging as each one will be counted as a transaction and a fee will be recorded.

Those records will have to be reconciled on a regular basis and removing the main reason for them will ease the transition to this package. That change is the biggest change that we have attempted with the application since 1998. Ms. Goonan asked if members had any questions. She then added that both her staff and vital records staff have online access to the list of change requests and can look at them and add to them. Mr. Bolton replied that he did not have access to that drive. Ms. Goonan stated that she would look into that.

Mr. Wurtz felt that another item that was important to mention was that each time a release is done the changes involved will be posted on the welcome screen of the NHVRIN application. Users will be able to see what to expect. He was unsure whether the posting would be in advance or done on the day the application is released. Many times changes will not be noticed as they happen behind the scenes to make everyone's life easier. Occasionally, as is the case with the "Another Transaction" button it will be a

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noticeable but beneficial change. Ms. Gaouette suggested it might be good to have it posted ahead of time.

7. Web Tool Update:

Mr. Bolton reported that we were still waiting for the developer (Constella) to provide a prototype that we can take a look at. They have provided the schema and Mr. Bolton felt that the DBAs were a little concerned with. He thought it was just a matter of education to describe why we are doing what we are doing. He thought there was going to be a teleconference where that could be discussed that afternoon, but had not received an email confirming that yet. Ms. Goonan stated that she just assumed they were on for every Thursday unless she was notified otherwise. Ms. Orman asked Mr. Bolton if they were not scheduled for every Thursday. Mr. Bolton replied that Mr. Stafford was obligated to provide an agenda and minutes every week. He explained that currently we are still looking at how to display the data and whether to use crude, population or adjusted rates, etc.

8. Budget Update:

Mr. Bolton explained that the report he had distributed (Appendix II) was probably very similar to what Mr. Bergeron spoke of in terms of detail. It shows classes of expenditures and what was expended with really no detail. He stated that he was unsure of the balance of the account but he believed it was over \$3.2 million. Mr. Gray asked about a transfer to OIT that was listed on the report. Mr. Bolton replied that it was for supporting the NHVRIN application and development. Ms. Goonan stated that it was primarily for staff. Not just the developers, but the DBA and the help desk support and that kind of thing. She felt that accounted for probably 90% of that figure.

Mr. Gray asked if this was average. Ms. Goonan replied that the average is about \$42,000. monthly. She explained that right now they seem to be in line with the budgeted amount. Mr. Bolton added that it can fluctuate. That the lowest month last year was \$26,000. and the highest \$62,000. During a twelve month period we paid \$480,000. Mr. Gray asked what causes the number to be high, is it help desk calls? Mr. Bolton replied that he thought we were probably billed separately for help desk calls. Mr. Croteau stated that he did not see this as a one month transfer. Mr. Bolton replied that he thought it was a quarterly billing cycle. Mr. Kruger added that if you run the numbers it is July and August.

Mr. Kruger agreed with Mr. Bergeron and echoed that he found this fiscal presentation totally unacceptable. The numbers mean nothing because there is no revenue numbers and it does not tie down to the balance of the fund. He cannot advise where to go with this fund with this kind of financial reporting. Mr. Gray agreed with Mr. Kruger about the budget report presented by Mr. Bolton. He went on to say that he supports this fund subsidizing those 33 towns initially with their internet access, but did not feel it should go on indefinitely. If other applications are using the access we provide they should also be paying part of the cost.

The fund should pay for what we use and not be paying for what we do not use. The revenue generated is put into this fund to preserve vital records not to support 33 towns internet connection. If they are going to use the connection for other things then they need to pay for it. Mr. Kruger stated that he would agree with that statement with the

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following caveat, if the towns are connected some may never have other uses so this fund will continue to subsidize them. If other people are piggybacking off this connection they should be expected to pay part of the expense of providing it.

Mr. Bergeron asked if as a non-member he could make a suggestion. The one thing he took away from his meeting with Mr. Gardner was that he was very surprised about a letter that came from the President of the clerk's association relative to some of the issues that have come before this committee. If the SOS does not respond to our request for more detailed financials as he promised yesterday, Mr. Bergeron suggested that all members of the committee go back to their professional associations and start firing off letters to the SOS.

Put pressure on that office from funeral directors, city/town clerks and hospital officials. They (SOS) have been completely unresponsive to this committee's requests for financial detail in budget reports for this fund. The committee cannot responsibly make recommendations for the fund without that information. We have had the benefit of having a nice balance over the years and have not had to worry about \$10,000. here and \$10,000. there. Mr. Bergeron stated that he remembered years when that was not the case. He felt that Mr. Kruger was correct and the issue needs to be pressed firmly and consistently.

Ms. Hadaway suggested that a copy of this report be faxed to Mr. Gardner so he can see what was provided to the committee. Mr. Kruger suggested sending him a blank page because that was all this report was. Mr. Hall asked if it was not just a screen shot or report directly from the state integrated financial system. Mr. Bolton agreed. Mr. Hall suggested that this is the way the state does all of its financial reporting for all of its programs. He suggested it was not an isolated issue. He added that his organization has another piece of software that they enter the data from the state system into and it prepares a spreadsheet that has greater detail. He suggested that someone create a more informative report with the data received from the SOS. There could be information about revenue and transfers to OIT. They could be broken out into what the money is paying for.

Mr. Hall did think it was important that everyone understand that this is the kind of report that managers around the state have to use. Mr. Gray stated that he was not trying to isolate OIT, but with more detail we might see trends that could be corrected and save the fund some money. Trends such as one municipality making multiple calls to the help desk. Some additional training or assistance could stop that from happening. Mr. Croteau explained that Ms. Goonan had presented the OIT expenditures for the year. This financial document is not good, but there is no reason why another document could be created that would allow for greater detail.

Mr. Hall replied that the committee would just like a better breakdown of what the money was for. Mr. Bolton replied that Ms. Hoover from OIT had been to a meeting and explained how the money was allocated. We get more detail when they bill us and he offered to bring that information to a meeting. He went on that in years past the detail the committee received was done by a different person in a different agency. After that changed Mr. Bolton had attempted to do it and was not very successful. Mr. Bergeron then tried to take it over as well. The buck has been passed around and the committee really did need a person to do a better job reporting to them.

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Ms. Hadaway stated that she was under the impression that the Grant Administrator position was supposed to take over this task, but they were unable to pin down the SOS on including that responsibility in the job description. She felt that would make the most sense.

9. Other Business:

Mr. Hall explained that he was appointed to this committee two years earlier as an information user. He admitted this was only about his third or fourth time ever attending a meeting of the committee. One of the reasons for that is because very little discussion has been about the use of this information and that is where his interest is. He wanted to raise a couple of issues for people to think about. One is probably two years off.

The kind of query tools he would like to see is the ability to look online at the age distribution of deaths in the six month period from north and west of Concord versus south and east of Concord. Where is that capability in the system? As a data user of that sort is my capability? Why are we collecting this information? There is a lot of useful information here. The second point is more complex. The state is now under contract with the Maine Health Information Center. They are collecting all of the healthcare claims paid by New Hampshire health insurers in the state. That is about 50 million records a year in this state. So everyone in the state that is having their healthcare paid for by insurers, all their information in every claim is in there and for each individual that information is coded in a one way unique identifier.

It is a one way encrypting algorithm so that you can sort out how much has been paid for a particular individual in a given year without knowing the individual but you can aggregate these things up and look at what percent of the healthcare costs that are being paid are in the most expensive ten percent of the population. He felt that sometime in the next ten years it would be helpful in looking at the cost of healthcare in this state to know how much we are paying for healthcare for people in the last six or twelve months of their life. How will we know that? We will need to take the death records and encrypt the identifier using the same algorithm that is being used currently and take those algorithms and ship them off to the contractor with the health claims and ask them to aggregate up for those individuals and then take that data and do some analysis across diagnosis, across age, gender, all sorts of things.

That is the kind of use Mr. Hall sees for the death data in the future. At some point in his point of view this committee should begin considering that. How can the state make use of this information it is collecting? It is not just the death data, but the birth and marriage data. That is where his interest lies and he wanted the committee to understand his lack of interest in attending meetings regularly and to alert everyone that in the next year or two he would begin pressing the issue. How we can make use of all this wonderful set of information.

Mr. Kruger stated that he felt that was a valid use of the funds that are being put into the ever growing pot here. He suggested that the committee should begin thinking along this line. He asked Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz if there were outside contracts that this fund was paying for that are still outstanding and is there a progress report on any or all of them. Mr. Bolton replied that the only outstanding contract was the data web tool contract with Constella and it is ongoing for the next few months. Mr. Kruger asked him

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to refresh his memory as to the amount of the contract. Mr. Bolton replied that it was approximately \$56,000.

Mr. Kruger asked how it was going and if it was on time. Mr. Bolton replied that it was not on time. It should have been delivered in November. Mr. Kruger stated that he really hadn't heard much about it. Ms. Hadaway asked if that tool would be able to accommodate Mr. Hall's wish. He replied that it would not be to the extent that Mr. Hall wanted. Mr. Bolton thought that the data sets Mr. Hall was looking for were being looked at by DHHS. He had also received a request recently from the Rand Corporation for linked data. Mr. Hall stated that his second item was for linked data and would require special programming to set up the encryption algorithm. That is much more complicated. The other item is to look at all the existing data in a way that is more than electronic microfiche calling up a single record to look at and print out. He would like to see the data aggregated like in a Crystal report kind of idea where you can throw in different variables. You can do that now with census data online and a lot of other things.

Mr. Hall stated that he would like to see this committee move more in that direction. Mr. Kruger replied that Mr. Hall should come to the meetings more often and the committee would do that. Mr. Bolton suggested that Mr. Hall volunteer to look at the prototype when it becomes available. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Bolton if he would have a more detailed report on the project at the next meeting. Mr. Bolton replied that he would provide more detail and timelines at the March meeting.

Mr. Kruger made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Hall seconded his motion and the committee unanimously agreed to adjourn at 11:53 a.m.