

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

- MINUTES -

Friday

February 19, 2010

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

February 19, 2010

Archives Building
2nd Floor Conference Room
71 South Fruit Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment
Stephen M. Wurtz, Acting State Registrar
Patricia Little, Keene City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Joanne Linxweiler, Auburn Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment
Dr. David Laflamme, Data User, DHHS Appointment
Tricia Piecuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
Debra Clark, Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist
Anna Thomas, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment
Stephen Norton, Vital Records User, DHHS Appointment
Robert Carrier, Funeral Director Association Appointment

GUESTS:

Vicki Tinsley, DOIT
Daniel Cloutier, SOS
Chris Bentzler, DOIT

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1. Meeting Called to Order:

- Ms. Little called the meeting to order.
- Ms. Little explained that the committee had met in November but had too few committee members present to reach a quorum. As a result there were no minutes prepared for that meeting. There was however, a revised draft of the August 21, 2009 minutes for the committee's action.
- Mr. Wurtz explained that the minutes had been taken by another staff member as Ms. Orman was unavailable for that meeting and the substitute minutes were found to not be sufficient. Ms. Orman submitted the minutes up for review by the committee. Ms. Little stated that she preferred the new bulleted format of the minutes. Subsequently, the minutes for August 21, 2009 were unanimously approved as written.

2. Financial Report:

- Mr. Wurtz presented the Vital Records Improvement Fund financial report prepared by Mr. Cloutier. He explained that the report before the committee was much more detailed and had been long awaited. The major complaint from the committee in the past was that they did not have a budget document that clearly showed a clear picture of where the fund stood at that moment in time. Recently this became more of a concern due to the fact that the committee was also considering replacing the NHVRIN application.
- Mr. Wurtz stated that the cost of IT support and the purchase price of a new registration application were being considered without benefit of up-to-date budget information. This made it difficult to plan for future expenditures. Mr. Wurtz stated that he believed this report would reassure members that the fund was financially sound and previous discussion regarding the need to raise vital record fees would no longer be necessary.
- Ms. Little asked Mr. Wurtz to go through the budget line by line and provide a general explanation as to what they were looking at. Ms. Piecuch pointed out that this was an updated document from the one committee members received the day prior. There was discussion about what time period this document covered. After which, Mr. Cloutier noted that he needed to amend the date the report ran through.
- Mr. Wurtz reported that through the sale of vital records the fund was looking at generating a little over \$1 million dollars for fiscal year 2010. In addition he explained that VRIF money had been deposited into an interest bearing account

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and believed that approximately \$20,000 in interest from that deposit would be forthcoming. Mr. Cloutier reported that he had written to Treasury regarding interest for past years but had not heard back, but the law was pretty clear that interest was supposed to be paid.

- Ms. Little asked if the interest issue had been picked up by the auditors when they audited the Department of State several years earlier. Mr. Scanlan replied that they had not picked that up. They had instead found that \$150,000 had been diverted into the General fund rather than the Vital Records Improvement Fund. Ms. Little asked where the money had come from. Mr. Wurtz replied that it was for vital records sold at the state level.
- Mr. Wurtz next reported on expenditures which included personnel, hardware and software purchases (projected \$1.4 million to replace NHVRIN), in-state travel and the grant program. After total expected expenditures the fund should be left with a balance of over \$2 million. Ms. Little asked how comfortable he was with the figure projected to replace the NHVRIN application. Mr. Wurtz replied that this was the number he kept hearing and that right now New Hampshire was in a great position because of budgetary constraints we are the only state with money to spend. He reported that vendors are anxiously awaiting our RFP. Even if the replacement estimates were off by \$1 million the balance of the fund has that cushion. Ms. Little thanked Mr. Cloutier for his effort in putting together the budget document. She told him that this document was long awaited and appreciated.
- Mr. Wurtz brought forward a motion that the committee vote to adopt the budget document before them. Mr. Allan felt that the ability to revisit the Preservation Grant Program was important. Mr. Wurtz agreed and stated that once a solid figure to replace NHVRIN is reached the committee should consider putting some money back into the preservation fund. Mr. Allan seconded the motion to adopt the budget as written.
- Mr. Scanlan asked Mr. Wurtz what vital records positions were being underwritten by the VRIF. Mr. Wurtz replied that there were two Data Entry positions and a Research Assistant for genealogical research. Ms. Piecuch asked what positions were vacant. Mr. Wurtz replied that none of the vacant positions in vital records were related to the fund but there was a proposed Business Analyst position suggested several years ago and DOIT has a developer position that has been vacant for some time. Ms. Piecuch suggested that if the positions were available and underwritten by the fund it would be a good idea to fill them before going forward with the RFP and further taxing existing staff.

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- Ms. Piecuch asked Mr. Scanlan to comment as she was under the opinion that Secretary Gardner was against filling the positions in question. Mr. Scanlan replied that Secretary wasn't necessarily against filling the positions. That there were needs department wide and they wanted to find a solution to satisfy them all. Ms. Piecuch explained that the fund would be willing to underwrite the suggested positions for vital records and they would not cost the state any money. Mr. Scanlan replied that he wasn't sure there was a need for a full-time position and that he would need to be convinced.
- Ms. Piecuch replied that she definitely felt there was enough work considering there is a moratorium on fixes to NHVRIN and the time it will take to eventually see a replacement for NHVRIN. In addition there are the accounting issues she experiences with NHVRIN. The NHVRIN application may bill \$28 when her records indicate she owes the state \$92. Mr. Scanlan agreed that there was a definite problem. Ms. Piecuch added that she reconciles her monies and catches the errors, but if other clerks were not following suit, there could eventually be a big problem.
- Mr. Wurtz stated that they were talking about two different positions. The business analyst would not have anything to do with fixing NHVRIN. That person could be used in the creation of the RFP, knowledge transfer and management of the RFP and contract once it was awarded. They could also help determine and document needs for fixes. Ms. Piecuch replied that the committee could decide to fill one or both positions. Mr. Wurtz stated that he supported the moratorium on fixes. That even with it in place significant changes had been made to the system in the last year. He explained that most of the changes were legislative and necessary to register same gender marriages.
- Ms. Pare-Curtis reminded the committee that there were only two dedicated DOIT staff and they had been and continued to be spread really thin. DOIT has been tasked with taking the lead in preparing the RFP in addition to supporting the NHVRIN application. She explained that the speed in which the RFP is written would be based on how much time is needed to support NHVRIN and prepare new releases. Ms. Piecuch stated that these issues would only put the RFP process further behind. Mr. Wurtz added that DOIT and vital records staff meet regularly to prioritize regularly changing needs.
- Ms. Little asked Mr. Scanlan if the position could possibly be a contracted position that would be full-time for at least the first couple of years with a specific beginning and end date. Mr. Scanlan replied that it could and that the Secretary of State is committed to getting the project going. That Vital Records is not the only division from the Department of State that puts out RFPs. He explained that

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Mr. Cloutier was working on several other major projects that were moving on successfully so he did not see why they could not handle the Vital Record's project the same way they do things, as a department. He wanted to first sit down and discuss where the needs really are before taking a position.

- Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that she had already spoken with Mr. Cloutier and he made it clear that he wanted to be kept informed on the RFP but that he did not have the bandwidth for this project and expected DOIT to take the lead. With only two staff members, they (DOIT) were facing real staff allocation issues. Mr. Scanlan reiterated that he was willing to discuss the situation. Ms. Little clarified that Mr. Scanlan understood the committee's position on filling the vacant positions. He replied that he did understand and he shared their position. Ms. Piecuch added that she did not want to see the project delayed any more than it already had been. Ms. Little stated that she felt the budget was more than ample to comfortably handle the addition of the two positions.
- The committee then voted unanimously to adopt the budget as submitted.

3. Vital Records Preservation:

- Mr. Wurtz reported that he had received an email from Mr. Manning who was unable to attend the meeting due to a prior engagement. The email explained that the grant program was winding down. He had sent an email to all municipalities that had accepted funds or were looking to accept funds from the program, asking that all requests be into his office by the end of March because as of close of business June 30, 2010 the Preservation Grant Program would end.
- A committee member noted that several clerks had forgotten about the program and were pleased to receive the reminder. They had since forwarded their information to Mr. Manning. Mr. Wurtz stated that it would be a shame to have spent the money on the assessments and have the clerks miss out on this opportunity.

4. NHVRIN re-procurement Report:

- Ms. Pare-Curtis reported that there were five vendors present at the demo. Two were particularly interesting, NetSmart and DB Sysgraph. She felt it was clear that most could deliver a package that would meet our needs, but the look and feel might not be exactly the same and that had been important to Vital Records in the past.

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- The next step was to work on the RFP and to make sure that all the requirements are included in it. She felt that JAD sessions with all stakeholders would be necessary to ensure all their requirements are included in the RFP.
- Mr. Wurtz explained that part of the problem is that we are looking for a package that contains all the different registration modules and most of the vendors out there have only focused on birth and death. He added that we may find a vendor with a product we want but only birth and death. We would then have to put our faith in them to produce a marriage module that would be comparable. Mr. Wurtz reminded the committee that New Hampshire is the only state in the world with a comprehensive registration system that includes a financial package.
- Ms. Little asked when Ms. Pare-Curtis saw the JAD sessions occurring. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that the timeline is out the window and that is due to the lack of staff dedicated to vital records. They had hoped to be further along at this point in the drafting of the document but same gender marriage had taken the majority of staff time. She suggested that Ms. Tinsley might be able to elaborate further, adding that neither she nor Ms. Tinsley had the time to lead this project. Ms. Tinsley replied that she would be involved in the project but Ms. Barton would be the lead staff member from DOIT.
- Ms. Tinsley added that the following week they were scheduled to meet with Mr. Perry to familiarize Ms. Barton with the RFP process. They would also be meeting with Mr. Wurtz to discuss the timeline. Ms. Tinsley agreed with Ms. Pare-Curtis on the staff shortage and suggested Vital Records and the committee determine how much of Ms. Barton's time be allotted to the RFP. Because the new system would be an off the shelf system Ms. Tinsley felt that the RFP would be easier to prepare. Ms. Little wanted to ensure that the RFP be specific enough to avoid the issues we experienced with the NHVRIN system. Ms. Tinsley agreed and added that she had not intended to imply that the RFP would not be specific as to requirements. Ms. Tinsley explained that despite its shortcomings everyone likes the current system so that is a good start and the assessment that was done last year will also be helpful in building the RFP.
- Mr. Allan asked if the MRI recommendations would be used in the RFP. Ms. Tinsley and Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that one of the areas MRI addressed was security and that might not be such an issue with an off the shelf system as it was with the custom built NHVRIN system. Many of their concerns would already have been addressed.

5. IT (STEVE) Update:

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- Ms. Tinsley reported that due to the number of same gender changes required to the NHVRIN system, DOIT staff had been unable to begin the business requirements for the STEVE extracts. The server has been installed, configured for the network and is currently running. Training had also been completed. Ms. Tinsley reported that it was scheduled to be next on the DOIT agenda but the new NHVRIN system may further set STEVE back. She explained that they would need to decide whether or not having Ms. Stewart program all the extracts into the existing database would be an efficient use of her time if a new database was around the corner that would need the same programming.
- Mr. Wurtz asked what Ms. Tinsley was referring to when she said “new” database. Ms. Tinsley replied that when we get a new system there would need to be a conversion to whatever database the system required. All the tables and fields that Ms. Stewart programmed would not be in the new database. Mr. Wurtz replied that all the vendors had a STEVE component and we would benefit from that. Ms. Tinsley said that would be much easier. Mr. Wurtz stated that he really did not want to lose STEVE. The ability to share data with our federal and state partners. Ms. Tinsley added that there are a lot of other uses for STEVE besides Vital Records.
- Ms. Little felt it was important to note that once the new system is in place the committee would see a reduction in costs. The longer we maintain the NHVRIN system we are being wasteful with the fund.

6. Big Fix Software Update:

- Mr. Bentzler reported that they had discussed this item at the last meeting but without a quorum could not act on it. It is a software distribution system for all the PCs in the field. Basically what it does is automatically update PCs offline so clerks do not need to be inconvenienced. Rather than calling clerks and advising them that he has to take control of their system to make updates they will happen during off hours by this application. It will save a lot of time and effort. Mr. Wurtz stated that there are 160 machines owned by the state but could Big Fix be used on municipality owned systems. Mr. Bentzler replied that it would be for state systems only.
- Mr. Wurtz explained that sometimes when a municipality updates their system it can conflict with the state application and that can frustrate Mr. Bentzler and he thought this could help alleviate that problem. Mr. Cloutier asked if the Big Fix contract had already gone out and would Mr. Bentzler be able to amend it. He had inquired about getting several extra licenses and was informed that procurement had been completed and there was question as to whether or not it

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could be amended. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that DOIT had made a very large procurement. It was so large that it actually lowered the price and Mr. Cloutier would need to speak with Purchase and Property regarding adding more to it.

- Ms. Little asked if Mr. Bentzler wanted approval from the committee to purchase the software. Mr. Bentzler replied that he did. Dr. Laflamme brought forward a motion to approve the expenditure of no more than \$4000 to purchase the Big Fix software with another member seconding. Mr. Wurtz asked Ms. Pare-Curtis if DOIT would bill the fund for the software or if they would just purchase it. Ms. Pare-Curtis and Mr. Cloutier discussed whether or not there were class 27 funds. The committee unanimously approved the expenditure of no more than \$4000 to purchase Big Fix software.

7. New Business:

- Mr. Scanlan reported that the legislature in the last budget decided to sunset all boards unless they were pegged by the legislature to be reinstated. He advised that they had decided to place the VRIF on the “keep” list. There were a number of boards and committees still up in the air. Ms. Little asked who made the decisions. Mr. Scanlan replied that there was a committee on committees. It is part of the ED & A committee.
- Mr. Wurtz stated that there was an ongoing issue with the NHVRINWeb statistical database application. The application was purchased several years earlier without a maintenance contract. Since that time legislative changes have created new data that needs to be added to the application. He explained that it has become necessary to update data in the application with civil union data and some screens with more gender neutral terminology. Because it was not written in-house and is not supported by DOIT it has become necessary to look into obtaining a maintenance contract to make necessary changes.
- Ms. Little asked the name of the vendor. Mr. Wurtz nor Ms. Tinsley could think of the name of the vendor. Ms. Pare-Curtis stated that she believed the committee had authorized entering into a maintenance contract with the vendor when the application was originally purchased, but it had never been followed up on. Mr. Wurtz added that the data is now becoming dated and researchers are unable to obtain the data they are looking for and Vital Records staff has to run reports for them they should be able to do themselves. He offered to research the cost of a maintenance contract with the vendor.
- Ms. Little replied that she would rather Mr. Wurtz not have to wait for the next meeting to secure a contract as the update needed to happen sooner rather than

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later. Ms. Little asked if Mr. Wurtz wanted the committee to authorize him to enter into a contract or if he was comfortable just going ahead. Mr. Wurtz replied that he would prefer the committee vote. Ms. Piecuch brought forward a motion for the Acting Registrar to enter into a contract with the vendor to maintain the NHVRINWeb application.

- Mr. Allan asked if there was an estimate of the amount of the contract. Mr. Wurtz replied that he did not have one. Ms. Pare-Curtis stated that the figure of \$20,000 for a couple of years was stuck in her head. She asked to amend the motion to authorize the Acting Registrar to procure a maintenance contract for NHVRINWeb at a cost not to exceed \$25,000. That motion was seconded by a committee member. The committee then unanimously voted to recommend the Acting State Registrar procure a maintenance contract for the NHVRINWeb application at a cost not to exceed \$25,000.

8. Next Meeting:

- Mr. Wurtz reminded attendees that the next meeting was scheduled for Friday May 21, 2010.
- Ms. Little adjourned the meeting.