

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

- MINUTES -

Friday

March 23, 2012

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

March 23, 2012

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, State Registrar
Patricia Little, Keene City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Tricia Piecuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Joanne Linxweiler, Auburn Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Brian Burford, State Archivist
Brook Dupee, Data User, DHHS Appointment
Bruce Riddle, Dartmouth Hitchcock, DHHS Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
Robert Carrier, Funeral Director Association Appointment
Ashley Conley, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment
Debra Clark, Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment

GUESTS:

Vicki Tinsley, DOIT
Bart Bronson, DOIT
Chris Bentzler, DOIT
Melanie Orman, Vital Records
Nicholl Marshall, Vital Records

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1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes:

- Ms. Little called the meeting to order at 09:30. She suggested that all assembled introduce themselves.
- Ms. Little noted that in a previous edition of the minutes, she had been listed as absent for that meeting yet she still called the meeting to order; Ms. Melanie Orman explained that in a subsequent edition of the minutes, that oversight, as well as who else was in attendance, was corrected. Ms. Little asked for a motion regarding the submitted for the September 23, 2011 meeting. A motion was made and seconded to approve the corrected minutes – all in favor.

2. New Members & Guests:

- There were no new members since the previous meeting.
- Mr. Stephen Wurtz introduced a guest, Mr. Nicholl Marshall, a new statistician who has now filled for four months the position vacated by the now retired Patsy Elderkin. Ms. Orman suggested that Mr. Marshall make take over recording the minutes.

3. Income and Expense Report:

- Mr. Wurtz distributed copies of the income and expense report for each year since fiscal year 2010. He noted that Mr. David Scanlan observed in the previous meeting that monies had been taken or earmarked out of the Vital Records Improvement Fund to the state: a one-time \$400,000 payment and a one-time \$500,000 payment. As a result, the project budget for fiscal year 2011 includes a \$900,000 deduction, but still leaves a balance of \$2.3 billion.
- Mr. Scanlan asked what would be the liability of the new NHVRIN upgrade. Mr. Wurtz estimated that over the next year or two, it would be \$1.3 million, with maintenance at about \$115,000 annually and a built-in contingency fund of about \$500,000.
- Mr. Wurtz had been invited to attend a committee hearing about abortion bill HB1680, which would involve gathering data about abortions in New Hampshire. The question is: would it be Mr. Brook Dupee's group at the Bureau of Public Health Informatics or the Division of Vital Records which would collect the data. Mr. Dupee stated that New Hampshire is probably one of only three states in the Union that does not collect abortion statistics. If New Hampshire does start collection such data on abortion, efforts must be made to ensure accuracy of the data as abortion is a controversial issue and all sides may question the quality such data collection. Mr. Wurtz contacted the vendor, and the vendor already has a module for the collection of abortion data as the vendor already

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provides this service to other states; the estimated cost would be \$60,000 for the start-up and \$30,000 annually in licensing. Mr. Wurtz further observed that while the Division of Vital Records has expertise in data collection, it would involve new contacts for the Division, namely clinics which provide abortion services.

- Ms. Little noted that the grant program to local communities from the Vital Records fund has been discontinued.
- Mr. Dupee believes that the quality of the completion of death certificates must be improved. He saw an article from Louisiana where only 40% of death certificates were considered a match results with hospital discharge data regarding cause of death. This caused much discussion within the state Department of Health and Human Services. Mr. Dupee suggested that medical schools should teach how to complete death certificates, and continuing education should be at hospitals. He also suggested focusing on institutions where death certificates are not completed well, particularly hospices and nursing homes, and to bring back autopsies. He mentioned a case in California where a county coroner autopsied decedents from that particular California county's nursing homes, and the study revealed sub-standard care contributed to many deaths. Mr. Wurtz observed that Vital Records is aggressive in querying physicians to improve the quality of cause of death on death certificates, and that the new system should help in improving the completion of causes of death. Mr. Wurtz also noted that hospital discharge data tends to be more thorough. Ms. Orman said that the law provides no legal repercussions for poor completion of death certificates.
- Ms. Little said that Mr. Scanlan's previous remark that the sizable balance in the Vital Records fund may make it an attractive target for being tapped for other uses is valid. Ms. Little also said that always having a business plan mitigates the potential of being an easy target. Mr. Wurtz stated the fund's purpose: the collection, automation, and better quality of vital records data.

4. NHVRIN Re-procurement Report:

- Mr. Bronson distributed a sheet summarizing the set-up and cost of NHVRIN II. Mr. Bronson reported that since the last meeting, the vendor came on site and had a week-long GAP session with the staff of Mr. Wurtz in late October. The discussion addressed details in each module, screen, and event should reflect the state's needs. That session resulted in a GAP document, which had been due on December 7, but was received instead on January 10. The initial review of the document revealed the document was not up to the standard the state had expected. Mr. Wurtz's staff and the vendor engaged in numerous telephone calls and meetings to straighten out the GAP document, which was not officially signed off until March 16. As a result, the rollout for NHVRIN II is presently behind schedule. Most of November was spend on addressing the hardware/software piece, and a new SOS environment separate from DOIT was

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explored. The cost of that is also on the sheet Mr. Bronson distributed. Dell provided a quote of almost \$250,000. Also explored was popping onto the DOIT virtual environment, where the estimated yearly cost would be just over \$13,000. Mr. Wurtz looked at the figures and it was determined that second alternative was much more beneficial.

- Mr. Bronson explained that there have been some vendor access issues; for example, some of the vendor's employees could get into the database servers but not the web servers. This access is necessary because the vendor is performing many actions remotely, which explains why their cost was low. The data conversion is ongoing now, and the vendor has been given about 90% of sample data tables with which to work. Not much can be done until the software is installed, at which point the state can see and test the system.
- Mr. Wurtz said this new environment DOIT has in place is the same thing was what would have been built for the Secretary of State. Vital Records is a good test to see if this environment could serve the Secretary of State for other applications well in the future. DOIT secured a grant which allowed them to build this equipment.
- Mr. Dupee asked that since all of this will be put on the web, what securities and protection are in place. Ms. Vicki Tinsley and Mr. Chris Bentzler explained some of the protections and securities that are present.
- Mr. Wurtz observed that this state has become so educated in automation that the state is teaching the vendor how to make improvements in the vendor's automation.

5. NHVRIN2 Roll-out Timeline:

- Mr. Wurtz had distributed a timeline which had been given to Vital Records early in the project. The state has reached every deadline asked of the state, but there have been a lot of deficiencies on the part of the vendor. Because it is a new system, training hospital registrars, funeral directors, and town clerks becomes necessary. Scheduling these training sessions was carefully planned to take various events, such as municipal and state elections as they affect the town clerks, into consideration. Originally, October 1 was the date when the first part of NHVRIN2 would go live, so that training could take place in the summer. December 1, after the state election, would be the date to roll out the marriage and divorce modules of the new system. One of the goals of the new system is to make the screens look as much as possible as the old system. Although the deadlines are important, have a full-ready product is even more important. DOIT

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group met yesterday and our status will be re-evaluated on May 1, because the data conversion should take place by then. But many things must be finished before the timeline can be achievable. Mr. Wurtz had a discussion with the vendor recently, and although there were some disagreements, Mr. Wurtz still feels NHVRIN2 will be sound.

6. DVRA & HAVA Voter registration Death Match:

- Mr. Marshall explained that incidents during the New Hampshire Presidential Primary have brought public attention to the abnormality of deceased people remaining on voter checklists. In order to minimize this problem, the HAVA office and Vital Records have been working together. The ultimate goal is that NHVRIN will contain data which will be extracted every so often so that names of deceased persons will be purged from the checklist. There still is the potential for faults, such as the town of a decedent's hospice/nursing home may not match the town of residence where a decedent has a voter domicile. Also, out of state deaths may take considerable time in reaching New Hampshire Vital Records. This new project will not remove the Voter Checklist Death Report option presently in NHVRIN.

7. Hardware, Communications, & NHVRIN Tech Support:

- Mr. Bentzler started by explaining that Windows 7.0 is the current operating system used by many businesses and consumers, and the state is starting to deploy Windows 7.0 as the standard for all personal computers which enter the office, including the personal computers coming into Vital Records. These computers are set up to use Internet Explorer 8, which works with NHVRIN, although there are problems with Internet Explorer 9. Office 97 is the standard office program used on these machines, but there have been problems where clerks are unable to open files that are coming into the new Office formats, and Microsoft has never made a compatibility pact to go back to that version of Office. DOIT has been looking into Open Office, a free product from Sun Microsystems, where people can open files, make changes, etc. and thus far appears to work fine. DOIT is considering using Office 2010 where the cost per license is about \$300.
- There are 145 personal computers in the offices now, 102 of them are eight years or older, another 26 are five to seven years old, so about 88% of the computers are out of warranty. Thus, if a machine comes in, DOIT will try to fix it and send it back out. Only seventeen machines out in the field are still under warranty. Only four personal computers are new and have not been rolled out yet, mostly because Mr. Bentzler prefers to keep some inventory and wait until the old machines are completely broken down before rolling out a new one.

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- The current machines each have 512 megabytes of random access memory (RAM). A new model expected to be used as a base model for the state each has two gigabytes of memory, is Windows 7 compatible, has a three-year warranty, and is priced at \$698 per machine.
- Ms. Little noted that with so many personal computers now in the field out of warranty, the inventory Mr. Bentzler presently has may not be enough. Mr. Wurtz said the equipment budget to replace broken computers was taken out years ago, so perhaps now is the time to reconsider this concern. Mr. Scanlan asked how many computers could be rolled out in a year's time and Mr. Bentzler replied about fifty per year.
- Mr. Bentzler said that the state is currently paying for Wild Blue access for thirteen towns, which is less than the high of 26 towns at one point. The state is actively working with some of these towns to re-evaluate what they have for service providers.

8. Proposed Legislation:

- No pending legislation will directly affect the fund, although SB225 would roll back the general fund portion of vital records fees to the city/town clerks.

9. Reappointment of Board Members:

- Mr. Wurtz observes that the second term of Ms. Little ends this year. Ms. Trisha Piecuch is the president of the New Hampshire Clerks Association and Mr. Wurtz charged her with appointing a city clerk to the committee. Ms. Little was happy to have served on the committee, and she says that Vital Records Improvement Fund is very fortunate to exist. Ms. Piecuch observed that other New England states wish they had established a similar fund in their states.

10. New Business:

- Mr. Wurtz addressed how often the committee meets. He proposed that the frequency of committee meeting be reduced to twice per year, that way a good agenda can be formed and people will want to attend. Mr. Wurtz moved that the committee meet twice per year; motion was seconded and a vote was taken – all in favor. If any pressing issue should require a meeting of the committee, that could still be done. Mr. Wurtz expressed thanks for all the committee members who do attend such meetings.
- Ms. Little adjourned the meeting at 10:56.