

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
September 21, 2006***

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

September 21, 2006

Health & Human Services Building
Room 110/111
29 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Joseph Gray, Rochester City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Judy Gaouette, Dover City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
Debbie Augustine, NH Hospital Association
Dr. David Laflamme, Maternal & Child Health, DHHS Appointment
Peter Croteau, OIT, OIT Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

David Pollard, Funeral Director Appointment
Doug Hall, Vital Records User, DHHS Appointment
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment
Kimberly Johnson, Henniker Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Bob Lambert, Peterborough Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
David Kruger, Public Member Appointment
Jill Hadaway, Bow Town Clerk, Town Clerk Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment

GUESTS:

Melanie A. Orman, Vital Records, SOS
Jackie Goonan, OIT
Steve Wurtz, Vital Records, SOS
Chris Bentzler, OIT

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

1. **Approval of Minutes:**

Mr. Gray called the meeting to order. Because there were not enough committee members present for a quorum Mr. Gray suggested that approval of the minutes be tabled until the next meeting.

2. **Records Preservation Grant Program:**

Mr. Scanlan thanked Mr. Gray and informed the committee that Mr. Teschner would be unable to attend the meeting, but had sent along several informational items for the committee to look at. He then distributed the handout to the committee. Mr. Scanlan explained that the first page of the document displayed a summary of the revenue and expenses to the fund. The information was up to date with revenues displayed as of September 20th and expenses as of August 30th. The then current fund balance was \$3,203,890.00. He went on to explain that the second page of the handout was more detail on revenues, pointing out that the September figures were not complete. The third page was a summary of expenses for the current year.

Mr. Scanlan added that there was one more thing he wanted to mention while he had the floor. He stated that the agenda had a placeholder for discussing the budget later, but he wanted to make a point before leaving the meeting. While putting together the reports for the Governor's budget he noted that the Office of Information Technology (OIT) had a number listed for Fiscal Year (FY) 08 of \$1,928,000.00 and in FY09 of \$1,568,000.00 and Mr. Scanlan reported that it was his understanding that \$1 million of that amount each year dealt with the RFP Mr. Bolton had discussed that must be encumbered if we are even considering it. He explained that he had asked Ms. Penney to pull that amount out of the budget and then if federal funds become available we can make use of those instead. That still leaves a balance of close to \$900,000.00 in FY08.

Mr. Scanlan stated that those types of OIT expenses would not be sustainable over time and suggested there needed to be serious discussion about those expenses. Mr. Gray suggested that they make yet another change to the agenda and discuss that item now since Mr. Scanlan brought it up. He asked Ms. Goonan if this meeting would be her last. Ms. Goonan replied that she had been promoted but that it would not affect her attendance of Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee meetings.

Mr. Gray stated that previously Ms. Goonan had offered the ability to select services via an "ala carte" system. OIT could provide estimates for the cost of each change request (CR) and he was interested in seeing how we reach the \$1.9 million dollar mark. He feared that if we keep saying we have the money to pay for these things we would not end up with any federal money. Mr. Gray felt that the feds might be more likely to provide funds if we say that we have X amount of dollars to put towards modifications/changes to the application. He reminded members that this fund is not just to support/maintain NHVRIN it is supposed to support the grant program and at these levels there is no way it can do both.

Mr. Gray suggested that it might be necessary to split the budget into a grant side and an Operations side. He added that the fund does not even make \$1.9 million a year. Ms. Goonan replied that she could speak a little about that budget information if Mr. Gray

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wished. He did. The \$1 million is for consultants if a Request For Proposal (RFP) is floated. A lot of what is in that budget is in 08 and is for hardware, server and PC replacements, and training. Items not found in the budget in prior years. They are also placeholders. If the hardware does not need to be replaced the money would not be spent. Ms. Goonan added that it was her understanding that if items are not listed in the budget they are very difficult to purchase. Some of the machines will be five years old by the end of FY08 and she felt that was important to note as that is about their life expectancy.

Ms. Goonan also noted that there had never been money budgeted for training before and she felt it was important to have a place holder in there, especially if there is discussion about supporting STEVE and EVVE and some of the other things that have been discussed as future needs, as they will require some training. Ms. Goonan explained that the rest of the bulk of the budget was in staffing. Staffing levels remain the same; four developers, a part-time business analyst, and a part-time project manager.

Mr. Gray asked Ms. Goonan to go back to the servers. In the next several years, due to intelligence reform the number of users would be going down and would that have an effect on the speed of the NHVRIN application? Ms. Goonan agreed that fewer concurrent users would improve performance, but not noticeably. She explained that the servers were not near maximum capacity at that point and were nowhere near being impacted by concurrent users. Mr. Gray replied that on the previous Monday, both NHVRIN and Election net came to a crawl. He asked if there was something specific that caused that. Ms. Goonan replied that the root cause was not determined, but it was determined that there was something wrong with the database server.

The NHVRIN web servers were fine. They have since put monitoring and tuning tools on the database server so they could optimize it. She believed that it had not been optimized and they realized that. She added that they were no longer experiencing problems in that area. Mr. Wurtz replied that it was slow that morning and that they had just reported it. Ms. Goonan explained that she had not been aware that vital records was still experiencing difficulty. Ms. Johnson added that the speed had improved somewhat, but that it was not back to "normal." Ms. Goonan replied that this was not the experience that had been reported to them. There were a lot of factors that can influence speed. Ms. Johnson explained that it takes ten minutes to log in.

Mr. Croteau asked if Ms. Johnson had called the help desk. Ms. Johnson replied that she had called on Monday. He then asked if there had been anything sent out informing users that it had been fixed. Mr. Bolton replied that there had not. Ms. Orman stated that there had been a message posted on the opening page informing users that the system was experiencing difficulties and that could be why no one was calling. Mr. Croteau asked if after it was fixed no one sent anything out to users. Ms. Orman replied that they had not noticed that it was fixed as they were still experiencing slowness.

Mr. Croteau asked again if any message had been sent out to users informing them that the application issue had been resolved. Mr. Bolton replied that they had not. Mr. Croteau stated that not issuing a statement that it was fixed led people to believe it was not fixed. Mr. Wurtz replied that they had left the message there indicating that they may encounter some slow response times as a buffer and that message instructed users not to call the help desk. Mr. Bolton added that the issue did not appear to be fixed.

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Mr. Wurtz went on to say that the day before the response time was better, but they were not comfortable with the explanation they were getting from OIT as to the cause of the problem so they elected to leave the message up. He added that the application had slowed down again today. Mr. Croteau asked Ms. Goonan who was working on the issue. Ms. Goonan asked Mr. Wurtz if he had spoken directly with Mr. Bryer about the problem. Mr. Wurtz replied that he had emailed the problem to tech support. Ms. Goonan explained that she would need to step out of the room to find out any additional information on the problem from her staff.

Mr. Gray replied that she did not have to do that and explained that what he would like to see since there is almost \$2 million forecast for Fiscal Year 08 is an itemized list as to how they arrived at that number. He suggested that even a budget might be appropriate. Ms. Goonan asked if Mr. Bolton and Mr. Scanlan had access to the OIT Agency Intranet as they could find a great deal of information there. She said that her understanding of the process was that emails were sent out that advise interested parties when the information was posted on the site. Ms. Goonan offered to send them that link to the information. Mr. Bolton asked if it was the same area where the invoices were posted. Mr. Croteau and Ms. Goonan replied that it was. Mr. Bolton stated that he did not think he had received any emails advising him that the information was available.

Mr. Gray explained that he did not want to see "Services and then a number." He wants to see it broken down to cost per change request and cost of hardware required. Mr. Gray added that if there is an issue with the database servers, we should look at possibly separating them. Ms. Goonan replied that the database server should be a separate discussion. She went on that the CR costs are possible to track when it comes to dollars spent. The budget on the other hand is different. She offered that she could provide all the details in the budget. If Mr. Gray wanted all the details of the CRs she would recommend that they do that when a CR is considered for prioritization and that the cost be factored into the business decision as to whether to move forward or not.

OIT has the estimates for the CRs and preliminary dollar amount estimates can be added as well. Mr. Gray replied that he just wanted to get away from large dollar amounts being thrown out with no explanation as to specifically what it went for. He asked Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz to prioritize the CRs and get that list to Ms. Goonan so we can get estimates. Then the committee can determine how many can be done. Ms. Goonan explained that the CR list was not part of the consideration when the budget was developed. The bulk of the budget is staff and that is based on the number of people, their labor grade, and the fact that they are full-time employees.

Figuring the cost of each CR would allow the committee to see how much time it takes staff to do a CR and what that translates to in dollars. Mr. Gray asked if we are being billed for people or staff hours used. Ms. Goonan replied that it is for people. She explained that her staff is dedicated to NHVRIN and they do not do any work for anyone else. There is time tracking and allocation so it can be determined how many hours go into each project. Mr. Gray asked if that is the case, then why is the committee not just given a specific number at the beginning of the year?

Mr. Croteau replied that for budgeting purposes they plan for a specific number of full time employees. At times there are issues that they are unable to tackle alone and additional help is needed. That is a cost over and above the regular staff payroll. If Ms. Goonan works on another project part of the time we would not be billed for that time.

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Mr. Gray still questioned why there was such a fluctuation in the cost of maintaining the application. Mr. Croteau replied that many factors that can influence the cost, such as vacant positions or overtime on projects. Ms. Goonan added that it is not just developer time that we see in all the billing, but database administrator time is billed when an upgrade is made to the database.

Mr. Gray asked if the committee could get the cost of its full-time employees and at least on the CRs see where you might need to go to other agencies or departments for more resources. He felt that they should be able to forecast when that would be necessary with CRs. Mr. Gray explained that the committee is aware that the work needs to be done but with that information they could better plan how to do it. Mr. Bolton stated that there are some things that cannot be predicted. Mr. Gray replied that he understood that. Mr. Bolton added that most of the spikes in the amounts paid to OIT were a result of an extra pay period. Ms. Goonan agreed with Mr. Bolton.

Mr. Gray stated that he would like to see what the cost to the fund would be for the OIT employees over the course of the year. That way the committee can then look and see when they are nearing that amount or going over and know why. Ms. Goonan replied that she would add a place on her usual handout that would break down the cost for the developers and other staff. Mr. Gray thanked her.

Ms. Goonan reported that the VRIFAC prioritization subcommittee has discussed the need to have a better understanding of OIT billing and Ms. Hoover from OIT had agreed to come over to explain the process. She asked if Mr. Gray and the committee would like Ms. Hoover to attend the November VRIFAC meeting. Ms. Goonan admitted that she is not a finance person and is not comfortable trying to explain it. She stated that there was a lot of money in there that is in no way related to fixing CRs. It is shared cost and that is why OIT was set up. Mr. Gray replied that he understood that is why OIT was set up the way it is, but that they need to understand so they can determine whether or not to go to an outside vendor for certain projects. He suggested that \$1.9 million was a crazy number.

Ms. Goonan suggested that the number Mr. Gray and the committee should be concerned with would be the agency software budget that went from \$500,000 to \$800,000. They may want to look into it to see why it increased so much. Mr. Scanlan added that revenues are currently just over \$900,000 and that budgeted amount would not be sustainable. Ms. Goonan replied that there were many options available. Moving some things out to FY09 would allow some breathing room. She stated that the hardware replacement was all lumped into FY08 and that could probably be changed.

Mr. Gray replied that he likes choices in his budget. If he takes one path it will cost this much and if he chooses another it will cost this much. He explained that he realized that would create more work for Ms. Goonan, but felt that any good budgeter likes different options. Dr. Laflamme asked if the revenues were expected to remain the same. Mr. Scanlan directed Dr. Laflamme to the second page of the handout that showed revenues for the past few years. He then realized he was thinking fiscal year instead of calendar year. Mr. Gray added that revenue could spike this year and next as passports become required to travel to Canada.

Mr. Scanlan asked to speak for Mr. Teschner, who was not in attendance, as he also had to leave shortly.

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3. VRIF Grant Procedure:

Mr. Scanlan explained that he had to leave the meeting shortly and he had materials to hand out for Mr. Teschner. He distributed the materials to the committee. The documentation showed that fifty-five towns had submitted grant proposals. With the help of Mr. Bolton, Dr. Mevers, and Ms. Hadaway, Mr. Teschner was able to select core consultants from a group of fifteen applicants. They have each been assigned seven municipalities to start. As they complete their assigned cities and towns they will be assigned new ones. With respect to supplies and services Mr. Teschner received fifteen responses to the RFP that was released. They are currently evaluating those proposals.

Mr. Teschner had also drafted a “best practices” document in user-friendly language that will soon be posted on the website. Mr. Teschner stated that they are continuing to promote the program and stated that the minutes from the previous meeting on page five-paragraph four stating that the program can be promoted without any effort on our part is incorrect and he suggested it be corrected. Word of mouth from the clerks is probably the best way to market the program. Mr. Scanlan reported that the program is moving along nicely. He then excused himself and left the meeting.

4. NHVRIN Budget Continuation:

Mr. Gray asked Ms. Goonan if there was any estimate for the cost of EVVE and STEVE yet. Ms. Goonan replied that there was not as they had no requirements yet. Mr. Bolton reported that his trip to Oregon was going to help answer those questions. They were meeting there to develop the requirements for STEVE. Ms. Goonan stated that prior experience made her estimate \$1 million dollars for the projects. Mr. Gray replied that the committee could discuss this further when Mr. Bolton returned from Oregon with a better idea of the requirements.

Mr. Gray reported that he had spoken with Mr. Bolton about this issue and he felt that all that would have to be changed would be the back end. The front end is fine. Ms. Goonan replied that she did not know if this was the right time to discuss it. She reported that the front end is very, very problematic at maintaining. They had actually discussed the front-end issue at the subcommittee meeting. Continuing work this week they (Ms. Goonan and her staff) are not even sure doing any enhancement, let alone major enhancement, may not be possible with the way the application has been constructed. The back end database is not optimum, but it is good for its intended purpose. The front end though is very difficult to fix.

Ms. Goonan was not sure Mr. Gray had met Mr. Bryer from her team, but she assured him that Mr. Bryer was very talented and was steering them straight. She felt that this was a discussion that would have to happen. At the subcommittee meetings they had discussed “nice to have” and “need to have.” Maybe they need to focus more on “need to have.” Mr. Gray asked if there was another user group coming up as he thought he should attend.

Mr. Gray agreed with Ms. Goonan that it might be the better forum in which to have that discussion. Mr. Goonan replied that the next meeting was scheduled for October 23, 2006 at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Gray stated that he would definitely attend that meeting. He asked

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Mr. Bolton if he would be in Oregon at that time. Mr. Bolton replied that he would not be in Oregon that week.

5. Personnel:

Mr. Bolton reported that there were three positions that his office was trying to fill. There were two data entry positions and one clerk IV position created. One data entry operator III position was filled internally so unfortunately, we now have a part-time position to fill. There was no register for the data entry operator II position at personnel so they are going through Employment Security to find applicants. We have yet to see any applications from that posting.

Mr. Bolton reported that they had received a large number of applications for the Clerk IV position. Mr. Wurtz reported that they had received twenty-four applications from Personnel, but had reduced that group to about a dozen applicants to bring in for interviews. Mr. Bolton stated that they could be making an offer of employment within the next week. The data entry III position will remain in her old position until they can find someone to fill it. It is a front line counter clerk position.

6. NHVRINWeb:

Mr. Bolton reported that NHVRINweb was very close to going online. The contractor is targeting October 12. It is convenient that the clerk's annual conference is occurring about the same time. Ms. Gaouette asked if there would be a demo at the conference. Mr. Bolton replied that they would be demonstrating the web query tool for the clerks at the conference and that the lead developer, Steve Wilkins and former State Registrar Charles Sirc would be traveling to New Hampshire for the launch.

Mr. Sirc helped to develop the tool with some funding from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). They will both take part in the presentation at the conference. Mr. Bolton explained that they would also be setting up in a room to demonstrate for interested clerks. Ms. Gaouette asked what the \$12,000 was for. Mr. Bolton replied that this was not a firm fixed price contract when it was originally settled upon. It was more time and materials. The contractor went over some and we agreed to pay a certain amount overage and then there were enhancements.

We put in underlying cause of death and want to report additional causes and the contractor would do that. Also, they have created a quick facts page and modified the login. Mr. Bolton added that he wanted the ability to export PDF files and the contractor accomplished this task as well. This allows each query to output to a statistical file or document. With that in mind they have an overage of \$12,000 and we have agreed to pay the contractor that amount. Ms. Gaouette asked if that would complete the project. Mr. Bolton replied that it would.

Mr. Gray asked if there was any further discussion on the subject. Dr. Laflamme replied that he had expressed concern about the project previously and since then he had been given the opportunity to go in and look around the tool. He had also spoken with some colleagues both in public health and UNH and all agreed that this tool should not go online as it is. He felt the biggest problem with NHVRINweb was that of constructive

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identification. Which means if someone wants to find out something about an individual they can probably find out through this application.

Dr. Laflamme passed out an example to the committee. The example is a death so it is not super sensitive, but it could be an AIDS death. He wanted people to be aware of this to see why it is such a concern to him. There is more than this one issue, but he felt this was the most important one. The example showed that he had asked for all deaths from Bedford, Goffstown, Manchester, and Wilton. In Wilton there are two little dashes instead of a number and that is because that number has been suppressed because suppression rules say that if it is less than five and more than zero it has to be suppressed. If you look at the table you can determine very easily that the number should be four.

It is not a complicated process to figure that number out. You just have to add up all the other numbers and subtract from the total. The way it is implemented now will not protect anyone. Dr. Laflamme reported that the way he had heard to do it was to take away one of the other numbers in the table to further muddy the water. He again stated that death is not that shocking because they are listed in the paper, but when you move on to cause of death that can be sensitive and could be considered a breach of confidentiality.

Dr. Laflamme again expressed his concern about it going online. He added that it is really nice to have real time data, but people could misinterpret the data. There is current birth and resident birth. Current births are those that occur in New Hampshire. Resident births are events that occur either in New Hampshire or outside New Hampshire. He cited the quick facts page Mr. Bolton had referenced earlier and advised that you did not even need a password to see that page. Mr. Bolton replied that he was aware it was available. It says that the percentage of low birth weight <2500 grams was 4.9%.

That is the occurrent low birth weight and that is what Dr. Laflamme did not think the average user was going to understand. They might cite that information in a grant application or report and it is not correct. We are really over 6%. Dr. Laflamme stated that the information is incorrect and the reason is that the out-of-state information is not in there. If someone lives in New Hampshire and they have complications some may go to a specialty hospital in Massachusetts. Those out-of-state events are very important when calculating rates like this. Even though there is a disclaimer on the site it does not appear on the quick fact page or on every results page.

Dr. Laflamme and his colleagues were very concerned that people are going to make some important mistakes when trying to interpret this data. He added that he would like to see a tool like this online eventually with the right safe guards. He did not think NHVRINweb was there just yet. Mr. Bolton replied that he was kind of surprised about the suppression issue. He asked Dr. Laflamme what query he used. Dr. Laflamme replied that the first one was "death in 2003 for these four towns by town. Mr. Bolton explained that they had worked with the contractor for just such a return. If only one number is suppressed the total would be suppressed to avoid just such an incident.

Dr. Laflamme replied that Mr. Bolton's solution would not work for the second slide. He suggested that all you have to do is run the same query without the town with the suppressed number and you will have your total. Mr. Bolton replied that all the query tools are the same way. If you work at it you can drill down to find out suppressed cells. He added that when you log on to NHVRINweb you check a box agreeing not to do that

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and are instructed that it is a class B felony to do so. Mr. Bolton explained to Dr. Laflamme that his attempt to demonstrate this supposed shortcoming would make him liable for federal prosecution. Dr. Laflamme asked if they had any way of knowing whether people were doing this or not.

Mr. Bolton replied that they do because they capture every users email address, what time they were on and what they accessed while on the site. Dr. Laflamme replied that it was one thing to capture the information, but another to actually look at each query and try to figure out if they are looking for something. Mr. Bolton explained that it is there and if someone were to go to the paper and use any of the information obtained through “drilling down,” you would be liable for prosecution.

The user would be on record agreeing not to do that under the penalty of law, yet there would be evidence that they did. Dr. Laflamme replied that if you want to know if your neighbor in a small town died of AIDS you would not be publishing it in the paper and it looks like NHVRINweb would have no way of discovering that type of drilling down. He did not see any process in place to prevent that type of use of the tool. Yes, they are tracking who is using the tool, but not watching every query run.

Mr. Bolton replied that in reality we are actually suppressing more than DHHS would because they release on a county level and NHVRINweb does not. Mr. Wurtz stated that Dr. Laflamme’s report was “eye opening” and he wanted to know what Dr. Laflamme and his colleagues suggest be done to remedy the situation. He added that all of the people that have been engaged in this project acknowledge this as an accepted practice. Dr. Laflamme replied that one of the things that kept NHWORKS off the Internet all this time is the exact same issue.

DHHS has not solved this issue yet, but when it does NHWORKS will go online and it will require a username, password, and authorized roles assigned, which NHVRINweb has already. Dr. Laflamme admitted he had not seen the whole tool, but felt it should not go online until a solution is found. Dr. Laflamme reported that he had spoken with the Executive Director of the National Association of Public Health Statistics Information Systems (NAPHSIS) and he said that he and some others had questioned the application being released with real time data.

Dr. Laflamme admitted they had not discussed the issue he brought forward at the meeting, but how current data could lead to misinterpretation. Mr. Gray suggested that there be two versions of NHVRINweb. One specifically geared to government use and one for use by the public. He asked Mr. Bolton how many categories for death there were. Mr. Bolton replied that there were hundreds. Mr. Gray suggested that maybe they could change the categories or reduce the number. He added that his reluctance to this tool was that it appears to be just a tool for insurance companies and big business. He envisions NHVRINweb as a giant marketing campaign for various businesses.

Mr. Gray suggested that for the public they should reduce the number of categories. Have disease, heart, accident, etc. By doing that it would be impossible for someone to drill down. Mr. Gray asked what do we want to protect, cause of death, date of death, etc. Ms. Orman stated that the health insurance companies, NAPHSIS and DHHS already have this data and they use the data and profit from the data. They may be hesitant to endorse this tool as it may take away from their business. All the data that is out there today is flawed because it has been shown most people lie to their physicians so

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the data we have is questionable at best and it is highly unlikely people will be lining up to drill down our data.

Mr. Gray agreed with Ms. Orman, but asked what does it hurt to broaden the category? Ms. Orman replied that it would no longer have any value. Mr. Bolton added that added utility to obtain broadened category data with regard to cause of death. You can select the 113 top causes. Mr. Gray replied that this was what he was talking about. He suggested that maybe we wanted to identify categories that we want to possibly protect a little better. Mr. Bolton replied that in actuality we have done that with cell suppression. He went on that if someone tried to drill down on AIDS data in New Hampshire the numbers are so low across the board they would have difficulty finding a cell that was not suppressed. He asked Dr. Laflamme if he had challenged it that way.

Dr. Laflamme replied that he had not because he was aware of the laws and he figured a death is reported in the newspaper and he could argue that he did not violate any laws with his challenge. Mr. Bolton added that DHHS also has access to birth and death data through its website and you could write the same discovery because he had done this himself. Dr. Laflamme did not think that was so. Mr. Bolton stated that real time data is important for many researchers, bio-terrorism for one. Dr. Laflamme replied that the people that need to do that are already in the government and they have access to the data warehouse. This is about public access.

Mr. Bolton stated that many users would be town clerks and officials from municipalities and they want current data. Mr. Gray reported that he had found using the system that eighty percent of Rochester mothers go outside of Rochester to give birth. Dr. Laflamme replied that the issue with real time data is researchers will not have access to any out-of-state data until it is entered, often up to a year later. Mr. Gray added that he could get data directly from NHVRIN with names and dates.

Ms. Orman related that the out-of-state births are a very small number in the grand scheme of things. Dr. Laflamme stated that they account for 11-12% statewide, but if you look at Rockingham County it is 29% of the births. Ms. Orman replied that officials accessing the data would be aware of that trend and they have historical information they can use and if the numbers are off they will realized that the babies are down at Children's Hospital in Massachusetts.

Mr. Gray asked when this was supposed to be launched. Mr. Bolton replied that they were shooting for October 12, 2006. Mr. Gray suggested that without a quorum they could not take a vote. Mr. Bolton stated that in regard to the contract itself, the committee agreed to it and it was not a firm fixed price. Mr. Gray replied that he was not trying to stop Mr. Bolton. If he had it in his budget to pay for it, he should. He explained that the committee could not provide a recommendation for it at this point. Mr. Bolton replied that he had intended it more as informational anyway.

Mr. Gray suggested that this issue be discussed further at the November meeting. He asked Mr. Bolton to inform the committee how many hits the site has had by that point and if there has been any suspected drilling down. He suggested it just be monitored for now and if we suspect there is anything going on we can address it at that point.

Mr. Bolton added that Dr. Laflamme may have spoken with Garland Land about NHVRINweb, but he had spoken with Dan Friedman and Gibb parish, the preeminent

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web query system developers in the country and Mr. Friedman loved it so much that New Jersey has already bought the system too. They are going to be doing a vital record web query system as well as BRFSS and their hospital discharge data set. Mr. Bolton replied that he did not think so. He suggested that DHHS should consider using it as well. It is a very easily maintained .NET application that is very cost effective tool. He suggested that Dr. Laflamme tell the Endowment about it. Dr. Laflamme asked if Mr. Bolton had not already done that. Mr. Bolton replied that he had tried.

7. **NHVRIN Update:**

Ms. Goonan distributed a handout to those in attendance. She reported that the good news was that her staff had completed eleven CRs since the last release. The bad news was that there had been eleven new CRs created. Since the last meeting her staff had done medium release that included the daily receipts/transactions report. Mr. Wurtz reported that the DVRA has received some very favorable comments from clerks about the new report and he wanted to thank Ms. Goonan and her staff for their hard work. Ms. Goonan was pleased to hear that. The release had also included changes in the way births outside the hospital are recorded, the way we search and add officiant data to the marriage module.

Ms. Goonan reported that they had upgraded to Oracle 10G in all instances of NHVRIN. They believe that was a great milestone. Upcoming October 16 is a single CR release 3.5A. This is to remove the short security paper form from the options in NHVRIN. Ms. Gaouette asked what that means to clerks. Mr. Wurtz replied that they are removing the short form from the inventory. From here on out all certificates will be printed on the long form. There will be no more confusing of DCN (Document Control Numbers) numbers.

Nothing is changing, except, there will no longer be choice in the size of paper. Mr. Wurtz explained that the clerks will still have the same functionality within NHVRIN, but the paper will now only be one size. The short form option they now have will remain, but the output by NHVRIN has been adjusted to fit on the long form paper. Mr. Wurtz explained that the learning curve when training new users is still quite sharp and this will lessen the confusion. This will also allow for better inventory control for the cities and towns as we move toward intelligence reform. The short form inventory is dwindling and when we get to the bottom, OIT will be notified and the application will be changed to only recognize the long form numbers.

The change really should have no effect on clerks other than they will no longer have to choose which size paper to use when printing certificates. Ms. Gaouette asked if the short form would just print on a section of the long form paper. Mr. Wurtz replied that the certificates would be modified to aesthetically fit all the usual information onto the larger form. There would be no large blank areas on the new certificates. He added that we would have to get out of the thought that “short” was the size of the paper. “Short” should instead, reflect the type of information contained on that piece of paper.

Mr. Wurtz explained that this change would eliminate inventory issues that vital records encounters when maintaining the different sized forms, issues with clerks confusing short form numbers for long form numbers and having difficulties with NHVRIN, and issues with clerks having to reconcile voided papers with their cash receipts when closing out their systems. This will also lead to greater accountability of users that the committee has

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requested in the past. Mr. Gray asked how difficult it would be to put a bar code on the safety paper as the SOS is providing clerks with a bar code reader. Mr. Wurtz replied that there had been discussion about possibly moving towards a bar code down the road. That would allow clerks to just scan their inventory rather than input the document control numbers.

Mr. Gray stated that a good document control system would be the state sending clerks the blank forms. The clerk would then scan each form and that would let vital records staff know that inventory was received. He explained that he is often guilty of giving the paper out and then going back in and being unable to keep the numbers straight. Mr. Wurtz replied that the problem Mr. Gray described happens quite frequently.

Ms. Goonan reported that her team had some “off-release” work (does not require a new release to implement.) that will bring the NCHS extracts more into line. For December, they are planning some work on fetal death and out-of-state death records. The work will aid Ms. Elderkin in the reporting she does for the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). Ms. Goonan reported that work had begun on the data dictionary. They would be publishing it in html format and providing access to interested parties. Because it will be an ongoing project it will continually be updated.

Access to the dictionary will hinge upon approval from Mr. Bolton. There will be no confidential information contained in the dictionary, but it is not for public distribution, as the data structure would be contained there. She explained that they felt that they could complete up to eighty percent without assistance, but would require help from Vital Records with the remaining twenty percent. Ms. Goonan reported that they were also working on altering the NHVRIN search function to only allow staff that is authorized to pull up out-of-state records. It was discussed that it was important that everyone not have that ability so out-of-state records are not inadvertently printed and distributed.

Mr. Wurtz asked if resident deaths were being shared with HAVA. Mr. Bolton replied that it was. Ms. Goonan stated that she believed it shared name, birth date and possibly social security number. The HAVA system takes that information and looks for matches in their system. Ms. Goonan added that she understood that out-of-state deaths were not currently being entered into the NHVRIN system because it needed work before that could be done. Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz agreed. She pointed out that the way NHVRIN is written it would be easier for her staff to come up with a stand alone module to enter the out-of-state data than to modify the application to accept it.

Mr. Bolton replied that they were working on developing STEVE and that would solve the problems with out-of-state records. Ms. Goonan stated that she wanted to further discuss a solution with Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz following the meeting. Her staff was also working on correcting the marginal notes on death records, a solution for purging pending searches and giving city and town clerks the ability to print divorce abstracts. Mr. Gray asked Mr. Bolton if they were aiming for clerks to have that capability by January. Mr. Bolton replied that they were. Ms. Goonan stated that there should not be a problem with that time frame as long as something else does not bump it on the priority list or one of the current projects develops problems. Dr. Laflamme asked where they were with the mother’s age issue. Ms. Goonan replied that it was on hold and that the person that had been working on that was now working on the fetal death module. She added that if Mr. Bruner finished the divorce abstracts and pending searches he could then begin the mother’s age issue. Mr. Bolton asked if some staff could be reassigned to

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assist with NHVRIN. Ms. Goonan replied that outside assistance would have more difficulty assisting with the NHVRIN application than her staff that is familiar with it. Mr. Bolton stated that there is staff like NHWORKS staff that is familiar with the data set. Ms. Goonan replied that they work with completely different code.

Ms. Goonan reported that the meetings of the priority subcommittee have been valuable and one of the things that have come from them is that the change requests have now been estimated and grouped into categories according to type of need. Mr. Bolton is looking at the list and is going to prioritize them for the committee. Once that has been completed Ms. Goonan stated that she would prepare a cost estimate for them. She explained that she had also done a presentation for the subcommittee so they could understand why it can take time for change requests to be completed. Ms. Goonan said that she would be happy to email the presentation to any committee member that would like to see it. Mr. Gray replied that he would like to see it.

Ms. Goonan directed the committee's attention to the budget. She explained to the committee that she would be happy to take any questions regarding it and return to the next meeting with answers from OIT. She added that this was the first month of the new fiscal year and she did not have the invoices for August yet. Mr. Gray asked why rent and lease was at thirty-three percent the first month. Ms. Goonan replied that it was billed quarterly. Ms. Goonan added that it would be great if Ms. Hoover could attend a meeting to better explain the budget information to the committee. Ms. Goonan asked if anyone had budget questions.

Mr. Wurtz stated that to ensure it was reflected in the minutes he wanted the committee to know that the fix for the elimination of the short forms was in the works. Ms. Goonan replied that it was. She thought it was in system testing and would then be tested by users. After that it would just sit and wait to be implemented. Ms. Gaouette asked if Vital Records would be sending out a message to users to warn them when it occurred. Mr. Bolton replied that they would. Mr. Gray asked if this topic would be covered at the clerks meeting. Mr. Bolton and Mr. Wurtz both agreed that it was on their agenda to discuss at the meeting.

Ms. Gaouette asked if it might happen before the clerk's meeting. Mr. Wurtz replied that they felt that they would make it until then. As of that morning he believed there were still twenty-five hundred short form sheets left. Mr. Bolton added that they were targeting the middle of the following month to make the change. Mr. Wurtz explained that a letter would go out to clerks informing them of the change and that they were targeting convention time for the changeover. Mr. Gray asked if they would call clerks that would need to use the long forms if they ran out early. Mr. Wurtz replied that it would all happen at the same time. As they get to the end of the supply of forms the capability to select short form will just go away.

8. Budget Information:

Mr. Bolton distributed a handout to members. He explained that the document members were looking at was budget detail developed by a VRIF subcommittee several years prior. He believed Mr. Bergeron had chaired the subcommittee. It had been formed to look at big-ticket items and the Peter Parker business plan. Mr. Parker had suggested the grant program so this budget included grant information as well. Mr. Bolton explained that this type of document was one he would like to revisit so the committee can make

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recommendations to the SOS and incorporate the preservation grants, assessments, and OIT budget.

Mr. Bolton explained that to create this document the subcommittee reviewed past expenditures, strategic plan, goals and objectives and with the assistance of clerks created a document that showed guidelines for expenditures from the Vital Records Improvement Fund. He stated that he was seeking direction from the chair on how to proceed with this. Mr. Gray replied that Mr. Bolton had a framework of what had been done in the past. He stated that he wanted to see a "proposed." Mr. Bolton replied that some of the things on the document were proposed and had not happened yet. A lot of the things were proposed and no action had been taken on them yet.

Ms. Gaouette suggested that the document Mr. Bolton distributed could be updated with more current information. Mr. Bolton agreed. Mr. Gray stated that the document needed to be maintained, but what he wanted to see was the cost of NHVRIN. After they have that cost they can figure how much to spend on the grant program. Take care of the expenses and see what is left over. Mr. Bolton replied that it was not as simple as NHVRIN expenses and grant money. There are a number of budget items that do not fit under either, but still fall within the guidelines set forth previously. He felt that every budget item the committee deems necessary in addition to the grants program and NHVRIN expense. Mr. Gray agreed.

Ms. Gaouette asked if it would take a change in legislation to separate out the grants portion of the budget. She suggested a percentage of the fund go to grants, possibly twenty to twenty-five percent. Mr. Bolton replied that the committee could make recommendations of an amount. He reported that Mr. Parker never recommended more than \$100,000. and they had also discussed percentages. Three to five percent was mentioned as reasonable. Ms. Gaouette stated that with the numbers they see today the fund would never be able to support them.

Mr. Gray stated that he did not like the Peter Parker number. He felt that it was way too low. Mr. Bolton replied that it was based on science. He looked at what was out there. Mr. Gray felt that for the amount of money this fund generates \$100,000. would not be enough money for the whole state. He felt that \$250,000 to \$300,000. was a better sum to budget. He explained the goal is not to have any carryover. We are lucky right now. We are sitting on top of a small pile of money and are benefiting from that.

He suggested that Mr. Bolton put together a budget, estimate how much we are going to put into the grant program and if there is money left over, let's do a wish list. Then if we need to replace servers we can use wish list money to do that. Mr. Bolton replied that he could come up with a budget, but he would like to involve some of the players to work on it with him. He suggested himself, a representative of the clerk's association, and someone from OIT. They would be looking at the two functions of the VRIF, automation and records preservation. For instance they were looking at purchasing a car for Mr. Bentzler to use when visiting users. As it stood each time he needed to use a car he had to travel to Records & Archives to procure one.

Mr. Gray replied that a car would be an item for the wish list. He stated he was not suggesting that every penny go into the grant program. He felt that there was enough money leftover to accomplish other things. He did feel that the committee needed to come up with a specific number to go into the grant program, but felt Mr. Parker's

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number was too low for the amount of money generated. He again suggested \$250,000-\$300,000. If there is anything left over then we could work from the wish list. He felt we could operate more efficiently if we did give Mr. Bentzler a car. Some of the numbers may also go down. With the coming intelligence reform legislation would we continue to provide hardware for 240 sites? Mr. Bolton replied that we would still support the clerks.

Mr. Gray explained that he was talking about a reduced number of sites that issue records. He stated that everyone needed to be aware that this could be coming. After we just expended all this money expanding to every city and town and the new legislation may require that we reduce the number of sites. Mr. Bolton reiterated “may.” Mr. Bolton explained that although the legislation is on the horizon it might be premature to look at your neighbor and say “you’re not going to be online.”

We have already alerted users that this legislation will fundamentally change the way we do business. He felt that users expect there to be some impact to everyone as a result of the new rules. Ms. Gaouette asked if there was anything concrete yet. Mr. Wurtz cautioned that people would hear the exact opposite of what was being said and draw their own conclusions from it. No one should be discussing it at all until it is known as fact.

Dr. Laflamme stated that he did not think that many of the things that we are funding now are necessarily things that we should be funding. He felt that the language “improvement and automation” could also mean data quality. Is the information in the system solid? He stated that “we” have done nothing to address that and there are data quality problems in the system that if you are looking for them you can find them. DHHS identifies some of them once in a while and Vital Records takes care of them sometimes. If you really want to improve the quality you really need to be looking for them on a regular basis and you need to have a quality person whose job it is to assess and act on the quality of the data.

That might be something else that would fall within the scope of the fund and there might be other things as well. Mr. Gray replied that he went to a meeting with the people that would be assessing all the sites for the grant program and he had explained to them we are dealing with a finite amount of data. There is only so much we can spend on that and that would then change. He added that we need the subcommittee so if there is a data quality issue it should be addressed there and that should be one of the things that OIT works on.

Mr. Wurtz stated that Dr. Laflamme was correct that Vital Records does data quality all the time. Is it enough? Mr. Wurtz was not sure. Is there a better way to do it? Again, he was not sure, but it is constantly being done in the business office. We find things daily and work to correct them. Dr. Laflamme interjected that he found a gestational age of – 40. He admitted it was several years earlier, but things like that do come up. Mr. Wurtz stated again that there is constant work being done on data quality. That it is part of a staff member’s job to do data quality. Do we need to assign additional staff to do data quality? Mr. Wurtz suggested that was a good question. He wanted the committee to understand that there is work done daily on data quality.

Dr. Laflamme stated that he felt there was not enough support or focus on it. In DHHS did a data quality check on the 2004 birth data and sent a list of issues that were found

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and have not received final resolution on those after six months. Mr. Gray asked Dr. Laflamme what he meant by data quality. Did he mean electronic integrity or the integrity of the data itself? Were the wrong numbers being typed in? Dr. Laflamme replied that in most cases it was the wrong number being typed in. The mother's age is one example of where errors are made. New Hampshire Children's Health Insurance Program is one of the payer sources and you have to qualify for that program. You need to be either nineteen or under (up to 21 if still in high school). If you look at mother's age after correcting for the original error, you can still get mothers listed as thirty to forty years old and stuff like that should not happen.

Mr. Wurtz explained to Dr. Laflamme that he was talking about the training of the interviewer at the birth facility. Dr. Laflamme replied that it could go that far back or it could be in the system as an edit check. Mr. Gray stated that he has an issue with Frisbie Memorial Hospital. They may take six or seven days to enter a birth record and by the time the parent receives the parent notice the fourteen-day correction window is about closed. Dr. Laflamme stated that this was the type of issue he would like to see get in the queue.

Mr. Gray explained to Dr. Laflamme that this was a staffing issue at the hospitals. He added that the funeral directors were much better at providing the necessary information. The hospitals were more concerned with patients, doctors, and nurses than medical records. Dr. Laflamme replied that there was a statute that the information was to be input within a certain amount of time. Mr. Gray agreed that was true but for the most part it doesn't happen. He calls the hospital when it gets really bad and they improve for a while, but always slips back again. Mr. Wurtz added that those types of issues are widespread throughout the state. The people keying the information play a big part in the quality of the data.

If we could come up with a model and control it, staff would be properly trained in medical terminology and would interview the mom, gather the information from the medical chart and entering it into the system. It does not happen that way. Vital Records has a Birth Data Quality meeting bi-monthly and these issues are addressed. Mr. Wurtz reminded Mr. Gray that the statute says the hospital has six days to file a birth record and we track their progress. When the clerks come to the meetings they receive reports on their timeliness and data quality. He added that the fourteen-day period does not begin until the record is filed. If the clerk forgets for a week to mail the parent notice then all bets are off. Greater than 90% of errors are caught and corrected within that fourteen-day period.

Mr. Gray replied that we all have to realize that there is human error and that will be around forever. He finds evidence of it going back to his older records in his vault. Sibling's records will show a parent's name spelled one way on one record and completely different on another. Dr. Laflamme replied that Mr. Gray's point was well taken, but felt that we need to look for it and especially for glaring examples. We can then intervene and correct it. Of course, some of them we can and will have to live with. Mr. Gray added that we should always be concerned with quality. Mr. Bolton added that the NHVRIN software has a large number of edits. They are edits that NCHS has requested and requires.

If users bypass the soft edits and input garbage that is what we are left with and often have to follow up. When it comes to birth, Vital Records tried for a PRAMS person

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through the grant process and was turned down. Mr. Gray stated that we have been working toward improving quality. With the recent approval to hire two data entry operators we will be entering additional data and proofing data that is entered elsewhere. Ms. Orman suggested that Mr. Bolton invite Ms. Elderkin from Vital Records to explain to the committee her data quality work. Mr. Bolton agreed that would be a good idea.

Mr. Gray asked if there was any further discussion on the budget. Mr. Bolton asked if it should be a formal process. Mr. Gray replied that he should generate a realistic budget, have the committee take a look at it and see where it goes from there.

9. NHVRIN Rollout:

Mr. Bentzler reported that there were currently 211 towns that are online. There are ten towns that are in the process of getting installs or setting up installation. Within a few weeks there will be another ten online. There are four additional towns that are ready to go, but we do not have any training scheduled for them yet. There are nineteen signed up for the next scheduled training session. A lot of those people will be first time PC users and will require greater attention. With the completion of that training we will have 224 towns on NHVRIN. If you do the math you will come up with 225, but Pittsburg is already online, but they are using dialup. They will be going ahead with high speed using the WildBlue satellite option.

There are ten towns that Mr. Bentzler has not been able to get in touch with or they have not responded to his inquiries. Out of those ten he has talked to three and there are two that are just not ready. One is going to have a town office built in the next year and they want to wait until then. Some just have no interest in participating. Mr. Wurtz asked if it was NHVRIN or the computer that seems to frighten them. Mr. Bentzler replied that there were several things that could be the issue holding them back. All in all he was pleased with the progress so far. WildBlue has been installed in eleven towns during the course of the summer. Mr. Wurtz explained to the committee that he had asked Mr. Bolton to send a letter to the remaining towns to encourage them to jump on the bandwagon.

Mr. Bentzler added that he was going to continue to try and reach them when he returned to the office. At this point he has dealt with most scenarios and felt comfortable that he could answer any questions they might have. Ms. Gaouette asked if the remaining towns did any vital records. Mr. Bolton replied that they did. Mr. Wurtz stated that these towns are doing (on average) less than a dozen records a year. The good thing is that they will now be able to provide these services to their residents. Parents will not have to drive to another city or town to pick up their vital records. They may also increase their revenue with the new capabilities.

Mr. Bentzler reported that he had been in Lyman the previous day for their install and they were amazed that they would not be using the typewriter any longer. It was like a whole new world to them. Mr. Wurtz explained to the committee that he would love to have any of them come to the next training session to help the new users become accustomed to the system and equipment. This session would be much more challenging than past sessions because many users would be arriving with no computer background at all. From a training perspective, it is a burden because we are training people with absolutely no clue about computers, mice, etc.

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We have to begin with starting up the computer and get through inputting data into NHVRIN pretty quickly. The training does not end there. They walk out the door knowing forty percent of what they should and when they go to their office and try to put it into practice the telephone calls begin. Staff will spend a great deal of time going through processes with users over the telephone. The subject matter experts in Vital Records are being stretched thinner and thinner and thinner. Mr. Gray asked if training goes to the clerk or if they travel to Concord.

Mr. Wurtz explained that they are invited to Concord for the sessions. Hopefully, once the move is completed we will have more flexibility with our new training room in the new building. Right now we have to reserve the training room at the Nash building months in advance. Mr. Gray stated that most of the National Guard Armories in the state have training rooms with computers. Mr. Wurtz asked if those were available for us to use. Mr. Gray replied that he did not see why not. They are there for federal training but he did not see why they couldn't be used for other training as well. Mr. Wurtz stated that he would keep that in mind for future training opportunities. Mr. Gray offered to help secure facilities in the future if Mr. Wurtz needed his assistance.

Meeting adjourned at 12:03 p.m.