

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

- MINUTES -

Friday

April 19, 2013

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

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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
Tricia Piecuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Brian Burford, State Archivist
Brook Dupee, Data User, DHHS Appointment
Bruce Riddle, Dartmouth Hitchcock, DHHS Appointment
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
Ashley Conley, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
Robert Carrier, Funeral Director Association Appointment
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment
Debra Clark, Charlestown Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Joanne Linxweiler, Auburn Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Janice Bonenfant, Concord City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment

GUESTS:

Chris Bentzler, DOIT
Randy Arrant, HAVA
Nicholl Marshall, Vital Records

1. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes:

- *Mr. Stephen Wurtz called the meeting to order at 09:43, although a quorum had not yet been achieved. He stated the first items of business when a quorum would be achieved were the appointment of a chairperson and the approval of the minutes of the previous meeting.*
- Ms. Theresa Pare-Curtis entered at 09:48 when a quorum was achieved. Mr. Wurtz noted that the last meeting of the committee occurred in March 2012.
- Mr. Wurtz made a correction that the minutes from the prior meeting should be dated March 23, 2012 rather than 2011. Mr. Brooke Dupee made a correction that it was Dr. Bruce Riddle who called for the improvement of the quality of the completion of death certificates. A motion was made and seconded to approve the corrected minutes – all in favor.

2. Appointment of a New Chairperson:

- Mr. David Scanlan nominated Ms. Tricia Piecuch to be the new chairperson of the Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee. Mr. Brian Burford seconded the motion. Ms. Tricia Piecuch is the deputy city clerk of Nashua with many years of experience. Vote was taken and all in favor.

3. New Committee Member:

- Ms. Janice Bonenfant of Concord was appointed to the committee to replace Ms. Patricia Little of Keene, whose term recently expired.
- Ms. Piecuch would like to review who is on the committee and gauge members' interest in continuing to serve on the committee.

4. NHVRIN Report:

- Ms. Theresa Pare-Curtis mentioned updates and progress of NHVRIN. Mr. Dupee asked if the next release would be the final release of NHVRIN I. Mr. Wurtz could not state with certainty if that would be the case.

5. NHVRIN2 – IT Update:

- Mr. Scanlan stated that information technology positions would change from the Department of Information Technology to the Department of State. The change will probably occur on July 1. There would be a business analyst position and a technical support position.

- Mr. Wurtz introduced Mr. Randy Arrant, who is helping DVRA with database issues. Ms. Pare-Curtis said that Ms. Mary Stewart, who is not present, officially retired on February 1, but is working part-time at the Department of Information Technology until her full retirement at some time in mid-June. Ms. Pare-Curtis also explained that Mr. Bart Bronson's estimate of the future go-live date of NHVRIN II is mid-October. There will be about eight weeks of User Acceptance Testing (UAT) and about ten weeks of training. Mr. Nicholl Marshall explained some of the differences, including the different layouts and deficiencies found up to this point, of NHVRIN II. Mr. Wurtz said Netsmart released the second release of NHVRIN II yesterday. If there is no "train the trainer" session, the transition to NHVRIN II may be difficult.
- The new system requires .net to be loaded on to each system. Mr. Chris Bentzler explained the complications in this. Ms. Piecuch speculated that larger towns will have an easier transition than smaller towns. DVRA will soon purchase a Macintosh computer to test the new system. The count of personal computers, both deployed and maintained, stands at 142. In Internet Explorer 9, problem would be fixed but would immediately return. Ms. Piecuch speculated if a survey asking what NHVRIN users need might help this situation. Mr. Bentzler noted that town/city clerks are in his database and hospitals will have their own information technology department, thus funeral directors are the "wild card" in transitioning to a new system.
- Dr. Riddle asked if Mr. Wurtz still had high confidence in the success of NVHRIN II. Mr. Wurtz replied that nine states had success in using this software vendor for portions of their vital records databases, but New Hampshire is still learning the intricacies of the new program. No other state has all the components of what the present NHVRIN has. The software vendor has admitted that New Hampshire is a difficult case because New Hampshire is already advanced when it comes to automation. The data conversion is a huge issue for all parties involved, namely DVRA, DOIT, and the software vendor. Mr. Arrant observed that the matter of civil unions and marriages has created certain complications.
- Ms. Piecuch noted that other states wish they had a vital records fund comparable to the New Hampshire Vital Records Improvement Fund. Ms. Piecuch asked that if the proposed budget is passed, will NHVRIN have support. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that there is no NHVRIN support as of July 1. Mr. Arrant observed that the transition between Ms. Stewart and Mr. Arrant has been good. Ms. Piecuch expressed her delight that Mr. Arrant is working with NHVRIN.

- HB2, which would increase the fee for a marriage license to \$50, is still in the legislative process. Incorporating such a fee into the electronic interface would be simple to make because a fee table already exists.
- Mr. Dupee emphasized that whatever comes out of NHVRIN II must be compatible with the EDW. Mr. Wurtz commented that DMV has already been notified about NVHRIN II.
- At 10:17, Ms. Pare-Curtis departed and a quorum was no longer present.

6. Vital Records Preservation Grant:

- *Mr. Wurtz said that the grant has been dormant in the last few years, but the grant would be helpful in funding improvements to the genealogy room. In the genealogy room in wooden cabinets, vital records cards are filed in archival boxes made of cardboard. However, now there is wear on the hinges of the boxes. Some boxes are in a state of disrepair. New boxes made of metal are available. Mr. Wurtz proposes getting new boxes, costing between \$18,000 and \$20,000, to replace those boxes in disrepair.*
- *Mr. Dupee asked about digitizing old records. Mr. Burford emphasized that whatever happens, the original records must be preserved. Mr. Dupee speculated that perhaps all members of the general public should be forced to go online for public records. Websites such as ancestry.com and other genealogical sites have reduced the number of visitors in the genealogy room. But Mr. Burford observed that historical researchers will still want to see an actual record in a box for various reasons such as misfiling and variations of spelling. Ms. Piecuch said that how a picture may look is critical. Dr. Riddle said that much of the digitizing technology available today is very good. For example, Xerox has good capabilities. But Mr. Burford speculated about the longevity of digital records, and noted that what destroys digital data is entropy. Therefore, Mr. Burford suggested microfilm to capture old records. Ms. Piecuch said there are New Hampshire's records which must be kept forever regardless of how many people handle the paper records. Since there is no longer a quorum, no vote can be taken on this topic.*

7. Old Business:

- *Mr. Wurtz distributed a chart of historical and actual budgets of the Vital Records Improvement Fund from Fiscal Year 2004 to Fiscal Year-To-Date 2013. Ms. Piecuch asked if \$1.3 million was taken out as previously discussed. Mr. Scanlan said he would investigate the matter.*

8. New Business:

- *Mr. Bentzler is still deploying new personal computers. Office 97 can not read the new file formats; Ms. Piecuch notes that it is not a Vital Records problem but rather a town/city problem. Mr. Arrant notes that anything new will require change.*
- *This year's annual meeting of the New Hampshire City/Town Clerks Association will be in September. Training in NHVRIN II should be completed by then.*
- *HB128, which would roll back money from general fund to the city/town clerks, is still being considered by the legislature at this point.*
- *Ms. Piecuch adjourned the meeting at 11:14.*