

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

To The New Hampshire Department of State

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
May 22, 2008***

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

May 22, 2008

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

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Jill Hadaway, Bow Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment
Dr. David Laflamme, Data User, DHHS Appointment
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
Patricia Little, Keene City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Kimberly Johnson, Henniker Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Doug Hall, Vital Records User, DHHS Appointment
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist
Debbie Augustine, NH Hospital Association Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Carol Johnson, Manchester City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment
David Pollard, Funeral Director Association Appointment
Anna Thomas, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment

GUESTS:

Melanie A. Orman, Vital Records, SOS
Barbara Kostka, Vital Records, SOS
Steve Wurtz, Vital Records, SOS
Chris Wittenberg, Vital Records, SOS
Tom Towle, MRI

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Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

1. Meeting Called to Order:

- Ms. Hadaway called the meeting to order at 09:36 a.m.

2. Approval of Minutes:

- Ms. Hadaway asked if members had received the minutes from the February meeting. She then asked for any corrections or comments. Dr. Mevers made a motion to accept the February 2008 minutes as written. Mr. Allan offered a second. The committee accepted the minutes as written. Several members stated that they preferred the new bulleted format.

3. New Member:

- Ms. Hadaway informed the committee that Ms. Theresa Pare-Curtis, Director of Web Services had recently been appointed by OIT to the committee to replace Mr. Peter Croteau.

4. Grant Administrator Position Update:

- Ms. Hadaway directed members to the information they had received from Mr. Bolton and Ms. Orman related to earlier discussion of the Grant Administrator position. She reminded members that they had been discussing going back to their original requirements when filling the position that Dr. Teschner vacated.
- Ms. Hadaway reported that she had spoken with Mr. Scanlan about it and he was aware and assured her that the Secretary of State (SOS) would be looking into it. He explained that they did want to tone down the position from where it had been with Dr. Teschner in it.
- Ms. Hadaway felt that the committee and the SOS were on the same page, but without Mr. Scanlan in attendance she could not say. When asked, Dr. Mevers replied that he had heard nothing about it. He explained that Mr. Manning had stepped in and was completing the work that Dr. Teschner started.
- Ms. Hadaway explained that she wanted the committee to discuss the position so they could share their vision of the position with the SOS. Ms. Little replied that she felt the original job description was ideal. The only change she envisioned was that the new Grant Administrator should report to the State Registrar (Mr. Bolton). She felt that there needed to be strong coordination there.
- Mr. Allan noted that in original discussions the position was envisioned as part-time or full-time for a couple of years and then becoming part-time. He did not feel the committee should consider making it part-time. Ms. Hadaway agreed. She felt that it would be a long time before the program was well enough established that the administrator would only be required to put in a part-time effort.

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- Ms. Hadaway envisioned the new administrator traveling around to the cities and towns, developing relationships, discovering wants and needs, and assisting in their realization through grants from the VRIF and others.
- Dr. Mevers reminded the committee that Dr. Teschner had hired consultants to speed up the process in the beginning. If the position reverts to its original job description those consultants might no longer be needed. Ms. Hadaway replied that she had considered that one of the consultants might be interested in the position.
- Ms. Hadaway asked Mr. Wurtz his thoughts. He replied that he agreed with Ms. Little about the administrator working more closely with Mr. Bolton and the division. He felt it could be a win-win situation. The administrator could assist the division when doing site visits, in terms of seeing how the clerks file their documents.
- Ms. Little agreed that it would be helpful to have a pair of trained eyes going out and making suggestions to communities as to the best practices. Mr. Allan agreed that this could be a great opportunity, stating that it is very difficult to get good user input without speaking to them face to face.
- Whether or not the position would be affected by the hiring freeze was discussed. Because the funding for the position comes from the VRIF it would not.
- Ms. Hadaway suggested that the committee forward its recommendation to go ahead and fill the position to the Secretary of State's office. She added that VRIF members willing to make themselves available to help with the interview/hiring process should let her know and she would pass on their information to the appropriate parties.
- Mr. Allan put forth a motion that the committee recommend to the Secretary of State to go ahead and fill the Grant Administrator position and to refer to the original vision of the committee when doing so. Ms. Little seconded the motion. The committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

5. NHVRIN Update:

- Mr. Bolton reported that since the last meeting there had been "a couple" of releases. The physician fax notification (March 14, 2008) and the out-of-state birth module (April 11, 2008) were both long-awaited, large pieces completed during this time.
- Dr. Laflamme stated that he was thrilled they were being entered, but asked about the speed in which they were being entered. There appeared to be only 30 records being entered per day. Mr. Bolton replied that he would speak with the data entry operator's supervisor when she returned from vacation to see if there was a problem.
- Ms. Little asked why we were entering data that we could not use. Dr. Laflamme replied that the majority of the data in the dataset was actually public health data and he uses it as an Epidemiologist for Maternal & Child Health. They had been waiting a long time for this data. The records being entered were from 2005 so it is very outdated. Generating population based data is very difficult, especially for counties like Rockingham where 30% of their births occur out of state.

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- Mr. Hall added that things had fallen really far behind from where they used to be. If there were some type of health “situation” there would be parts of this data that they would want to plumb into right away and right now it is three years behind. He felt that 18 months should be more than enough time to get all the records in the system and felt a deadline should be set.
- Mr. Bolton replied that the division also had important uses for the data. The data entry positions were initially created to help the state comply with the upcoming Intelligence Reform legislation, but had been redirected to enter the out-of state births.
- On March 27, 2008 NHVRIN version 5.3 was released. A major focus was on assisting with the entry of up to 5,000 New Hampshire medical professionals that certify death into the NHVRIN tables. He estimated that there were approximately 650 certifiers in the system at that point. Most have never used the NHVRIN application, but because they may certify a death at some point they need to be registered to access it. Initially users had no way of knowing if a certifier they selected would receive notification that there was a record for them to complete when their name was selected from the drop down menu. This release included a new message to be displayed to the user. This lets funeral directors know that they will have to notify someone rather than relying on the software to send a fax or email.
- Version 5.3 also included fourteen other changes including changes in the death and civil union modules relative to the domestic status of the parties. There are now automated monthly extracts for the SOSKB invoicing program.
- Ms. Hadaway inquired about whether clerks would ever be able to get rid of pending searches without charging them. Mr. Wurtz replied that they have asked OIT to provide division administrators the ability to purge individual cities and towns after reconciliation is complete on a monthly basis to prevent them from being carried over from one month to the next. He reported that they had purged everyone three weeks prior to this meeting in anticipation of going live to all cities and towns.
- Ms. Hadaway felt that this ability would greatly benefit clerks when it came to reconciling their accounts when the accounting software is released statewide and they are expected to account for every transaction.
- Mr. Hall asked for an update on the list of Change Requests (CRs). It had been several years since the subcommittee had prioritized the list and he felt the committee should receive regular updates especially since they were only meeting quarterly now. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that she had an updated list, but was scheduled to meet with her staff and Mr. Bolton in the next week to discuss how they wanted to go forward. She reported that since Ms. Goonan’s last report in September 2007, 25 had been closed and 42 added. She agreed that the prioritization of the list was very important.
- Mr. Bolton explained that he had spoken with Ms. Barton about sharing that list with MRI and had asked her to go over the list to look for requests that might have been completed but not closed out. Ms. Pare-Curtis promised to have an updated list

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prepared for the meeting with Mr. Bolton and would place an electronic copy somewhere committee members could access.

6. OIT Staffing Discussion:

- Ms. Pare-Curtis reported that the vacant developer position had been filled as of May 19, 2008. Ms. Goonan's position was caught in the hiring freeze and was on the waiver list. Ms. Barton was helping to provide some of the services Ms. Goonan had while performing her own duties. Ms. Pare-Curtis planned to meet with Ms. Barton and Mr. O'Neal to discuss what tasks could be set aside until they are able to fill the position.
- Mr. Hall asked how much of Ms. Goonan's position was general funds and if it was not a lot, could the committee supplement it to help get it approved. Mr. Bolton replied that the VRIF only maintained 25% of Ms. Goonan's salary. Ms. Pare-Curtis added that the other 75% did include general and federal funds. She explained that DHHS needed those matching funds.
- Dr. Laflamme asked if the committee could not make the matching funds one dollar (\$1) and make it much more likely to be approved. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that the Approval process did not work that way. The position would still need to be approved. She added that OIT had 40 positions like this one.
- Ms. Hadaway asked where Ms. Goonan's position was in the process. Ms. Pare-Curtis replied that it had been before the committee four times and they had so far elected to take no action on it. Until recently the committee had been either approving or taking no action on the positions submitted. She had begun to hear about positions being denied.

7. NHVRIN^{web} Discussion:

- Dr. Laflamme reported that he had discovered that NHVRIN^{web} was providing incorrect data for low birth weights by up to 50% and he was wondering if there was a CR for that on the list. It was reporting 9% when the correct number was 6%. Dr. Laflamme replied that he had spoken to Mr. Bolton about it in March. Mr. Bolton asked Dr. Laflamme to send him an email with specific detail (numbers) of the errors he was reporting so it could be tested.
- Mr. Bolton told the committee that there had been changes to the html portion of the application to change the header of the query result and also to automate the NHVRIN^{web} extracts to extract the data each morning.

8. NHVRIN Update:

- Mr. Bolton reported that NHVRIN had now been rolled out to 231 cities and towns. Hart's location was scheduled for installation on June 3. Benton would also be coming online at about the same time. The final town, Ellsworth did not have an

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install date scheduled yet. Committee members were pleased that this longstanding goal of 100% of clerks online was about to be realized.

9. Constella:

- Mr. Bolton explained that he was hoping to enter into a contract with Constella to augment and assist with additional development of the NHVRIN_{web} application that has already been identified, but that OIT has no staff to assign to. Constella was the contractor that originally developed NHVRIN_{web} and they are making the original developer available to us.
- Mr. Bolton had shared the proposal with OIT and was awaiting their analysis, but understood that Ms. Barton believed it was reasonable. The work needed to be done and if OIT did not have the staff available, he wanted to go forward with Constella. Mr. Bolton added that after discussions with Ms. Stewart he thought the proposal would have to be modified. Ms. Pare-Curtis stated that she was unaware that OIT already had a copy and had nothing to report on it.
- Mr. Hall asked how Mr. Bolton arrived at the decision to go forward with these items over other change requests that had been in the queue for some time. Mr. Bolton explained that for the NHVRIN_{web} application we have knowledgeable contractors, ready, willing and able to help us. For NHVRIN, we do not.
- Ms. Hadaway was unsure if Mr. Bolton has answered Mr. Hall's question. Mr. Bolton replied that he was hearing outside concerns and based on his experience observing the application, he felt it was important to act now. Ms. Little added that it is a live application that is out there in the public eye. Mr. Bolton stated that he felt it important that he ensure that NHVRIN_{web} was working correctly and that all issues would be addressed with this contract.
- Mr. Allan asked how many CRs that would remove from the list. Mr. Bolton replied that none of the bugs that would be addressed were even on the list. He reminded the committee that when NHVRIN_{web} was being developed Mr. O'Neal committed a one percent (approximately \$20,000-\$30,000 annually) budget increase to address maintaining the application over the years. He felt it was originally envisioned that OIT would perform the work with that increase. In reality they are not at a point where they can develop and maintain this application.
- The contract with Constella will allow us to maintain the application as we originally planned. Ms. Hadaway asked Dr. Laflamme if this application was the one used by his department. He replied that they had not been thrilled with it thus far and were using raw data. Mr. Bolton added that several employees within DHHS have a direct feed of all the birth and death data, so they could do their own statistical analysis without the NHVRIN_{web} tool. He added that although Dr. Laflamme's office was not thrilled with the application, there were approximately forty other DHHS employees that were using the NHVRIN_{web} software.
- Dr. Laflamme asked if there was any monitoring of the users going into NHVRIN_{web}. Mr. Bolton replied that they were going to address more user transparency in the contract with Constella. That Ms. Goonan had suggested

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capturing IP information, but the amount of data that would have to be culled to get anything useful was tremendous.

- Mr. Hall asked when the work would be completed. Mr. Bolton replied that it was a one year contract running from April to April. Dr. Laflamme suggested trying to reduce the time allotted to complete the work to six months. Mr. Hall added that for \$20,000 he assumed they would complete the work in a month or two. Mr. Bolton replied that the good thing about the contract running a year was if Mr. Line finished early and did not use all the scheduled hours, he could be assigned additional tasks as needed.
- Ms. Pare-Curtis asked if there would be time tracking done with the contract. Mr. Bolton asked if she was offering. She replied that they could discuss that further when they met the following week.
- Mr. Allan offered to make a motion to move forward with the Constella contract with a caveat. He asked that the bugs that were going to be addressed by the contract be added to the current list so members could see the entire list of change requests. Mr. Hall agreed that they just add those five changes to the list. The committee voted unanimously to approve the Constella contract and add the bugs listed in the contract to the CR list.

10. Other Business:

- Mr. Towle explained that he was at the meeting to give a very brief update on how the project is going. The committee had given them three questions they wanted them to study.
 1. Are we spending our money wisely?
 2. How can we reduce costs?
 3. What are the risks of alternative support methods?
- He explained that his staff was in the data collection phase; sifting through a lot of documentation provided by Mr. Bolton and OIT. Mr. Hall had also provided them with some information. They have begun some of the cost studies but are still basically in the infancy stage. They planned to speak with the original developers of the NHVRIN software just to get some input from them and had already had one lengthy meeting with OIT staff to look at the system and the code. To see what is involved from the OIT perspective. They planned to spend additional time with them as well as the people that work in the field with the clerks, towns, and funeral directors.
- MRI had met with several clerks and hoped to get around to meet with more so they can get everyone's perspective. They are approaching the project from three perspectives; as users they want to talk to everyone involved in the day-to-day operations. They want to know about what users like and dislike, functionality, whether current support is adequate, and these factors will help them to better understand the costs. The administrative perspective is also very important. They have spent some time with Vital Records staff and hope to spend more time so they can better understand their needs and why there is a constantly growing list of change

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requests and additional time as well. His staff will also be spending time with OIT staff so see the NHVRIN application from the support perspective. What is it that they are faced with on a daily basis? Why it appears to take so long to do things? This will hopefully allow MRI to better understand our application and how best to support it.

- Mr. Allan asked if Mr. Towle's team was being given adequate access to all the data they needed to analyze the situation. Mr. Towle replied that they were given a great deal of information and everyone had been very cooperative. He did not get the impression that anyone had an axe to grind. They are hoping that in the end it will be a win-win situation for everyone. They are just an outside set of eyes looking at the situation, hoping they can provide a different perspective.
- Ms. Hadaway asked when he expected to complete the work. Mr. Towle replied that they had an end date of August 22, 2008 so they were targeting early August for a draft report. That would give the committee time to come back with questions if they felt something was missed. The challenge was going to be getting around vacations now that we have moved into the summer months. He did not anticipate any problems, but would contact the committee if they needed to adjust anything.
- Mr. Allan suggested that Mr. Towle contact committee members by email if they run into problems because the next meeting would be mid August and they would have very little time to make changes before the contract expired. Mr. Towle replied that they could probably put together documentation and a rough, bulleted draft that they could share with committee members by email. Something members could read and comprehend in advance of the final report. Ms. Hadaway thought that would be a good idea.

11. Other Business:

- Dr. Mevers reported that Mr. Manning and Ms. Penney had provided him with a fiscal report to distribute to the committee. Ms. Little asked if they were saying that the fund balance was the number at the bottom of the report. Mr. Bolton replied that it was not the balance. Mr. Hall explained that the document did not have the balance of the fund or the revenue. It was just the expenditures through eleven months.
- Ms. Little asked if anyone knew what the fund balance was. There was no reply. Mr. Hall stated that there was no revenue showing either. He asked if there was not previous discussion about the financial reports the committee was receiving. Ms. Hadaway replied that this was a discussion held frequently. She asked Dr. Mevers if there was a page missing and Dr. Mevers replied that there was not.
- Mr. Hall suggested that the committee ask that the missing pieces of information (revenue side and overall balance sheet) be sent to members via email as soon as possible. Ms. Hadaway agreed. Dr. Mevers replied that Mr. Manning had said that there was some additional information he planned to share with the committee. Ms. Hadaway stated that hopefully it was the revenue side of the report as this document did not tell the committee if they should tighten their belts or spend money.

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- Mr. Hall said that they committee also needed a balance sheet. The document presented was a print out from the state financial system, not a financial report. Ms. Little stated that the financial reports had not been satisfactory since Vital Records left DHHS. Mr. Bolton added that it had been discussed early in planning that the financial reporting would be handled by the person in the Grant Administrator position.
- Ms. Pare-Curtis stated that there was more information available on the state system than what the committee received. Ms. Hadaway explained to Dr. Mevers that the committee was not shooting the messenger, but they had been promised better reports for some time and had not received any to date. She explained the committee was very disappointed in the reports received from the Secretary of State's office. Ms. Hadaway tasked Mr. Bolton with making sure committee members receive the rest of the information via email. She stated that the committee had just approved the expenditure of funds that they do not even know they have.
- Mr. Wurtz reported that the SOSKB pilot program involving 13 towns was proving successful. He explained that after some early pitfalls it was now coming together and they planned to roll it out to the rest of the cities and towns in phases. Hospital cities and towns would be the first phase once the pilot was complete.
- Mr. Allan stated that if the focus of the fund was grants, it was only using about 50% of expenditures on the program. Ms. Little replied that when the fund was created it was mainly intended to support the automation of vital records. Ms. Hadaway explained that the grant program came about later when the committee recognized that the fund had grown quite large.
- Ms. Hadaway informed committee members that several members' terms were expiring and they would be leaving the committee. Those members were: Mr. Hall, Ms. Johnson, Dr. Andrew, and Mr. Pollard. She thanked those members for their contributions to the committee and wished them well. Mr. Hall replied that although he was leaving the committee he wanted to attend the next meeting to hear the MRI presentation. He asked Mr. Bolton to email him a reminder.

Meeting adjourned at 11:03 a.m.