

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

-MINUTES-

***Thursday
September 20, 2001***

Approved Minutes

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

September 20, 2001

DHHS Building
Room 110-111
6 Hazen Drive
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Patricia Little, City Clerk Member
William R. Bolton, Jr., State Registrar
Patricia Seskes, Health Information Specialist Appointment
David Kruger, Public Member Appointment
Dr. Frank Mevers, State Archivist Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

Tom Janosz, Funeral Director Appointment
Jane Ireland, Town Clerk Member
William Armstrong, IT Manager, DITM Appointment
Paul Bergeron, Nashua City Clerk, City Clerk Appointment
Debra Eastman, Town Clerk Appointment
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Physician Appointment

GUESTS:

Dr. Jesse Greenblatt, Director, Division of Epidemiology and Vital Statistics, OCPH
Melanie A. Orman, Program Specialist, DEVS
Tom Gaff, Office of Information Systems, DHHS
John O'Neal, Office of Information Systems
Mark Parris, Office of Information Systems
Barbara Kostka, Bureau of Vital Records
Steven Wurtz, Supervisor of Registration, DEVS
Vicki Tinsley, DITM

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

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Meeting called to order at 10:07 a.m. by Ms. Little. The first order of business was to approve the minutes of the July 19 and August 20, 2001 meetings. Ms. Little asked for a motion to adopt the minutes and Mr. Kruger seconded. The committee voted to accept the minutes of the July 19 and August 20, 2001 meetings as written.

1. OIS Update:

Mr. Parris distributed a handout and introduced a new member of his team, Tom Gaff. Mr. Gaff is a Business Analyst that is helping with Vital Records projects. Mr. Parris reported to the committee that he has been extremely helpful in many areas, particularly the RFP process. Mr. Parris felt that Mr. Gaff would be instrumental in developing the RFP for web development.

Mr. Parris also wanted to familiarize the committee with all the members of his team. The committee was already familiar with Mr. Friese and Mr. Milligan and Mr. Parris had just introduced Mr. Gaff. He went on to explain that Jeremy Dupuis would also be joining his team as a Systems Development Specialist. Mr. Dupuis is a recent college graduate and has the education and a great background to be a valuable member of the team.

Mr. Parris also advised the committee that he had recently gotten word from the Networking group that they feel there is at least enough modem capacity to bring on the remaining nine hospital towns and possibly up to six additional towns. He went on to say that his team is planning that rollout now. Their first targets are the remaining hospital towns. Mr. Milligan and Mr. Wurtz will be contacting the towns in question and scheduling appointments to meet and discuss their coming on. They are hoping to hold training for the new clerks December 11, 13 and 14th. Mr. Parris feels that will be ample time in which to train the clerks. He hopes to start them on VRV2000 around the first of the year, but was unsure of the exact time frame.

He went on to explain that the machines that we have in the towns where the Department of Safety is already set up will be able to share the communications lines and transmit their data. When all of the agreements have been signed those towns will be allowed to come on as well. The target date for that is early January of 2002. He pointed out that the eligible towns were listed on page six of the handout. At this time he was unsure whether they were all interested in coming on board.

Ms. Little asked about the "agreements." Mr. Parris explained that they are user agreements between the Office of Information Systems/Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Safety, which entail details such as cost sharing. How and who would be paying for specific things and at what percentage. Also, if we are going to share machines an agreement needs to be reached regarding security. As the committee is aware, the Department of Safety is much more stringent than we are in the use of their machines. Mr. Parris also in speaking with Mr. Croteau, found that there are some FBI and other federal mandates which limit how their machines may be used. Those items need to be worked out so that we can access their network.

Mr. Kruger asked if, assuming the towns just mentioned are brought on, if there are other larger volume towns or cities that are not on VRV and should be. Mr. Parris replied that

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there are several that fit that description: Salem, Hampton and Pelham to name a few. He explained that those three towns are secondary targets. Assuming we have the modem capacity available. Mr. Parris stated that the nice thing about the frame relay towns is there is no modem required. They are attached through the frame relay without modems.

Mr. Bolton asked if Mr. Bailey was discussing sharing equipment costs for the next fifteen towns that will be brought on via the Department of Safety communications line. Mr. O'Neal said that they are looking at sharing the communications cost as Safety has already paid for the equipment for the first fifteen and that we would be expected to share the cost of equipment for the next fifteen. Mr. Bolton suggested that when that deal is worked out, it be brought back before the committee.

Mr. O'Neal agreed and asked if anyone remembered the cost of Pembroke. He stated that he thought it was \$100 per month. Mr. Bolton replied that it started out at \$120 and moved down from there. He believes our share would now be \$50 per month, per machine. He went on to say that the equipment cost is \$5000 per office and that would also be split. Ms. Little asked if that is what we were planning to do, split it evenly. Mr. Bolton stated that for the second fifteen sites, yes. Mr. O'Neal added that he isn't sure Mr. Bailey had gotten that far yet.

He is reasonably sure they can sign an agreement for the first fifteen sites and the cost will not be prohibitive. The second fifteen, he was unsure. Mr. Kruger asked if he was correct to believe that there is no increase in overall cost of communication by piggybacking on the existing system. Mr. O'Neal replied that there is an increase, but it is a fixed cost because they are using a DSL line. Mr. Kruger stated that what he was asking is whether the overall cost of \$100 doesn't increase with our usage. Mr. O'Neal stated that no, the cost would be the same.

Ms. Little asked if the Department of Safety had approached us to help pay for the equipment for the original fifteen towns. Mr. Parris replied that those towns were already targeted by the Department of Safety for municipal agent use and they had not approached us about costs. He added that for any additional towns, they would want us to help with expenses. Ms. Little asked Mr. Bolton to verify that the Department of Safety did not approach us about helping with the expenses they incurred installing the first fifteen sites. He explained that they had not and suggested that as the committee moves forward, it should look at the document created by Mr. Andrew and Mr. Gerow regarding the volume of certificates and use it as a reference before expending a lot of money on new sites.

Mr. Parris stated that ultimately the solution to all of the current problems would be to web enable the software. He reported that the state now has its web architecture determined and that will enable them to proceed with the planning. Mr. Parris did not have specifics, but said it will be a Microsoft solution. OIS and BVR are scheduling a series of meetings to create a list of changes or enhancements that need to be made or perhaps do not need to be made. Mr. Parris feels we need to make sure we have all business rules covered when we start moving into the web enablement project. We need to make sure that everything on the list from when the original VRV2000 was created are still valid, as well as any additions or changes.

Neither Mr. Parris nor Mr. O'Neal was involved in the original process. Ms. Little asked Mr. Parris to explain what he meant by "business rules." He replied that there are things

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that VRV2000 does that from a business point of view, may no longer be necessary, or rules may have changed. He feels that it would be wise to go over it completely before jumping headfirst into the web enablement project. Ms. Little asked if the committee had a list of business rules at its conception. Mr. Bolton replied that it had. Mr. Parris reiterated that those original rules may be accurate, but it is best to look them over before beginning the project.

Ms. Tinsley asked who the project manager was for the web enablement project. Mr. Bolton replied that it is a joint project, but more OIS. Ms. Tinsley explained that there is a law passed by the legislature that requires collaboration with stakeholders and there are policies out of DITM that has several steps that must be followed to comply with the law. She explained that she was asking so that she could send the information to the correct person. Mr. O'Neal stated that when he works on a project such as this with DHHS he thinks of the business group as the driver and that they are assisting the business group. Ms. Tinsley stated that she would send it to Mr. Bolton. Mr. Bolton asked her to also send it to Mr. Parris. Mr. Parris added that he would be happy to take a look at it.

Ms. Little asked Mr. Parris to explain a little more about the web architecture. Mr. Parris explained that he was not terribly familiar with it and asked Mr. O'Neal if he could explain further. Mr. O'Neal told the committee that the state team had selected a Microsoft IAS server. He explained that their only other option had been Java and they felt that was too expensive. The content management section is from Microsoft. It will be Visual Basic based. He added that we already have both web architectures running in the state environment today, but believes that the Centers for Disease Control uses a Microsoft IAS server. On a positive note, DHHS already has IAS expertise in-house. He went on to explain that the state already has one application running in a Java environment and that it has turned out to be very expensive.

Mr. Bolton asked if that would interfere in the selection of a vendor for software as some of the vendors that had been looked at had used Java. Mr. O'Neal replied that the committee should look at what we did with other applications. We chose a platform for the applications that included Power Builder and Oracle and anything outside that architecture, we had to justify why we wanted to go with it. They did not rule it out, but felt that an easier connection to our architecture would be Microsoft IAS. Ms. Little asked if there was a standard. Ms. Tinsley replied that DHHS is a little ahead of the state in the timing of selecting this architecture as they have just went through consultants in selecting the architecture. She reminded the committee that the statewide IT plan is in the process of being written.

When the plan is published there will be standards outlined in it. Ms. Tinsley expects that plan to be published near the end of the year. She explained that because the plan is not complete there is not currently a standard. They are handling these projects on a case-by-case basis. When one comes up they try to take a look at the broader picture and see how things will fit together. Whatever the state ends up with, it will not be in direct conflict with the Microsoft architecture. She went on to add that entire state government cannot run on a single little platform. Ms. Tinsley stated that there would probably be a core standard and if an agency wanted to go outside of that they would have to have a very compelling reason. She stated that Microsoft is pretty open and flexible and didn't seem to think the committee would have a difficult time finding a vendor for web enabling software. Mr. O'Neal added that it is much more affordable to go with Microsoft. He explained that they had also looked at an IBM solution, but from past

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experience knew how difficult it was to get training or to find people qualified to work on it. In the past we have had to outsource our IBM activity. He admitted they do have a very robust solution for the web, but he was unsure if even DHHS could afford it.

Mr. Parris stated that there are three companies that he is aware of that are working on a web based solution for vital records. He advised the committee that Mr. Bolton and Mr. Friese went to see those demonstrations. He was under the impression that two of the three vendors would meet the Microsoft platform requirements. There are other companies that will be interested in developing an application when they become aware of the RFP. He believes the RFP will dictate the Microsoft platform requirements in one way or another.

Mr. Parris told the committee that the work will begin on the RFP. Once they have finished reviewing the business rules they will meet with Eileen Grimmer from his office, who is very adept at creating RFP's. Ms. Grimmer will help to craft the RFP and assure that it is in the proper format. The RFP will then be sent to vendors on the ITS07 list and any others that may have interest in it. We will then sit back and wait for proposals to come in. There is a timeframe set up within the RFP that dictates the amount of time a vendor has to respond. Mr. Parris believes the timeframe, once issued is eight to ten weeks.

Mr. Kruger asked who would make the final selection. Was it up to the committee? Mr. Bolton replied that a team would be formed to go through the responses and select the most attractive proposal, based on a scoring system. Mr. Kruger asked who would officially approve the spending of the money. Mr. Bolton replied that the team would recommend the contract, but the Governor and Council would have to award it. Mr. Kruger wanted to confirm that the committee was not the approval body. Mr. Bolton confirmed that. Ms. Tinsley explained that after a vendor is selected DITM must approve them and then it goes before Governor and Council. Mr. O'Neal added that he felt that the committee would have to be reported to and kept in the loop. Mr. Kruger agreed.

Dr. Mevers asked if the Fiscal Committee had anything to do with this process. Ms. Tinsley replied that they did not. They already approved the outlay of funds. Mr. Kruger, Ms. Tinsley and Mr. O'Neal all agreed that the Governor and Council would only be interested in whether the contract had been competitively bid and was funded. Mr. Kruger asked if Governor and Council required that they select the lowest bid. Mr. O'Neal and Ms. Tinsley replied that they did not. Mr. Parris reported to the committee that the business office would be responsible to select a team to review and evaluate all the proposals and select the best. He believes it will be comprised of technical and business people alike. Mr. O'Neal asked if the committee would like a member to be on this team. Ms. Little replied that it would.

Mr. Parris explained that the next new release of VRV2000 would be near the end of January or early February. After that he would like to schedule new releases every six months. He prefers they be scheduled in advance. The new release will include six items left over from the May release. These items were done by Mantech, but not in time to be properly tested and included in that release. There are also some fixes to other problems included in the new release. Because some of the issues were around reports, Mr. Friese had to make some fixes outside VRV to make the reports available. With the new release those items will be tied back into the software. Mr. Parris added that there could be other issues that arise in the meantime that need to be added.

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Ms. Little asked Mr. Parris if he was aware if any of the changes would be significant to users. Mr. Parris replied that the business office could better answer that. Mr. Bolton advised Ms. Little that most of the changes would only affect the bureau. Mr. Wurtz added that he was under the impression that the biggest thing in the new release was the fourteen-day correction from date of event versus date of filing. He felt that would be the only thing that would have a direct effect on the clerks. Mr. Parris reported to the committee that the business office and Mr. Andrew were in the process of amending the contract with Mantech.

He explained that the plan for the change to the contract would be for emergency telephone support. Mr. Parris explained that he used the term emergency because from this point forward his staff would be responsible for making changes, enhancements and corrections to the VRV2000 software. If for some reason they get stuck they could contact Mantech for advice and that is nice to know. He stated that all corrections that would be made would come from Mr. Bolton, his staff and the committee. All the modules of VRV2000 are now ours and are being migrated into a tool called Harvest. This allows them to control the software. When future changes are made to the software, that part of the program will have to be checked out and is tracked throughout the process. The program will keep track of the latest version and where it is. They have also begun using the CRTS (Change Request Tracking System). When errors are found or changes are requested Mr. Bolton or his staff can input them into the system through a Lotus Notes database.

Ms. Little asked how much we would be saving on the Mantech contract. Mr. Bolton replied that the original contract amount was \$99,000 but there was a 5% rider that would have raised it to \$103,000 or \$105,000. Ms. Little then asked what the revised contract would cost. Mr. Bolton explained that it will be \$17,000, but because of the sale of VRV software, it will not cost us a thing. The \$17,000 we would have received from Mantech from the sale, is instead being applied to the amended contract. Ms. Little remarked that we would only see this benefit for this year. The committee would have to foot the bill next year if Mantech's assistance was still required.

Dr. Greenblatt asked Mr. Parris to report to the committee how he came to the decision to have his staff take over the responsibility for the correction and creation of additional VRV2000 code. Mr. Parris responded that his personal experience is in software development and configuration management for other applications. When he took the position there was a transition period between Mr. Gerow and himself. As he watched them ready the May release he was able to sit back and look at his new team members and the user groups. That allowed him to get a feeling for how competent and able his staff would be to take over the software.

What he learned is that Mr. Friese, Mr. Milligan, and certainly Mr. Gerow, who has moved on but is still available, are quite capable. With the addition of Mr. Gaff to the team he knew that they would be able to handle this contract much more efficiently. They could also enlist Mr. Sliwoski, our database administrator when necessary. From the dealings he had observed with Mantech during that same time period, he felt we could handle it better than it was being handled. Especially when it came to software development and enhancements. He admitted there is always a little nervousness when undertaking something such as this. The work that Mr. Bolton and Mr. Andrew have done to keep this agreement in place to the degree that it is, gives them a really good

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comfort level. Mr. O'Neal added that it meets our standards and fits into our system really well. He has approximately 20 Power Builder programmers that he could throw at it if need be. The state also has five Oracle Database Administrators that would be available if needed. He feels we have a good base for taking this on.

Ms. Little asked if there would be a need to add staff. She referred to the handout Mr. Parris had distributed and asked if the staff listed there was sufficient to maintain the application. Mr. Parris added that there is another individual that reports to him, but has not been directly involved in the Vital Records software. His name is John Harland and he is a System Development Specialist and available if needed. They are planning to begin familiarizing him with the VRV code. Outside of that he was unsure what the need will be after we are web enabled. He doesn't know if that will require more or less work from his staff. One of the things he has been hearing about is other offices within OCPH that are receiving grant money to enhance systems which may interface with VRV at some point. They may not, but if they do, there may be a need for additional staff at that point.

Mr. O'Neal reported that they are in the process of upgrading their dial in modem capability. There will still be forty-eight modems but the equipment being moved in has the capacity of ninety modems. They need to buy something called a Primary Rate Interface and Mr. O'Neal was unsure of what exactly it was but it provides us with twenty-three additional lines. The cost would be approximately \$2000 per month. So if the committee would like to expand our capabilities it can add twenty-three connections for that \$2000 per month. He can look into it and provide the committee with the exact cost if they are interested. This would give us seventy-one rather than forty-eight modems.

Mr. O'Neal inquired if the committee would be interested and did they want him to pursue it. Mr. Bolton asked if that was the alternative to us paying 6.5 cents a minute or if it was in addition. Mr. O'Neal explained that he needed to check further into that. He stated that Leslie Williams believes we are not charged the 6.5 cents per minute for the 800 line calls that are dialed into from inside New Hampshire. That fee would apply for calls from outside the state. Ms. Williams is trying to verify that, but all indications from the billing are that this is the case. From what they can see, there is no charge for calls made to the toll free line from inside the state.

Ms. Little asked how much the committee is paying for the current modems. Mr. O'Neal explained that Mr. Bailey has been picking up the expense of those modems, but has warned he may not be able to cover the entire year. He did tell Mr. O'Neal that as long as he has money he will continue to cover the cost of the modems. Ms. Little asked if we are in need of more modems. Mr. O'Neal replied that he believes we are getting close. Ms. Williams looked at the maximum number of connects that we had and she came to the conclusion that we had never gone over thirty-one. Given that, Ms Williams feels that we can accommodate another 15 towns for dial in.

The concern is that we are bringing in Juvenile Justice and Mr. O'Neal was unaware of what their dial in needs would be. Ms. Little asked if that means that more than clerks were currently using the modems. Mr. Bolton explained that the modem bank is used by the entire department. We are all on the same forty-eight line modem bank. Mr. O'Neal stated that typically the hospitals and funeral directors dial in and do what they have to and then log off, with a few exceptions. He went on to say that it is usually the town

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clerks that log on and stay on. Because of this he feels we are getting really close to needing more modems. He asked if the committee would like to invest in another twenty-three lines and bump up our capabilities or take our chances.

Mr. Bolton asked about the new PRI software upgrade and the eventual ability to log off inactive users. Mr. O'Neal explained that the new box they are installing would give us the capability to log off users with no activity. Mr. Kruger asked how much lead time would be needed to add the new lines. Mr. O'Neal replied that it would have to be ordered from Verizon and would take four to six weeks to arrive. Mr. Wurtz asked if the \$2000 per month would be shared among all the users or just the Vital Records Improvement Fund. Mr. O'Neal explained that it would only be the fund and the \$2000 would be paying for the twenty-three new lines. The department (Mr. Bailey) currently pays \$4000 monthly, for two of them now. Ms. Little asked if that meant that OIS is absorbing \$4000 a month for the committee. Mr. O'Neal explained that the \$4000 is for the whole department, of which the committee is a part.

Ms. Little asked that since this had not been identified in the committee's budget, were there funds available for it. Mr. Bolton replied that there were. Mr. Wurtz asked Mr. O'Neal if he had a timetable for the implementation of the thirty-minute timeout. Mr. O'Neal replied that Ms. Williams has estimated it will take approximately two months to finish the install. He does not expect us to have that capability until the end of this calendar year. Mr. Wurtz commented that it will fall in line with the additional rollout to the hospital towns. Mr. O'Neal agreed. Ms. Little stated that she would support the purchase of the additional lines. She feels the committee needs to be concerned with the aggravation level of the town clerks.

She is aware of how frustrating it can be when a customer is standing in front of you and you are unable to connect to VRV. Anything we can do to alleviate that will be greatly appreciated. Mr. Wurtz added that just that problem is one of the things he is planning to stress when the thirty-minute timeout is launched. He wants to assure them that with the twenty-three additional lines they should be able to get back on when they need to. He believes that is why they stay on now, fear of not being able to get back on. Ms. Little agreed and asked if there needed to be a full motion. Mr. Bolton replied that he did not think so. Mr. O'Neal asked if the committee wanted him to pursue the additional modems. Ms. Little and Mr. Bolton agreed that he should.

Ms. Little asked if that was it for the OIS update and if it was she wanted to bring up something that was not on the agenda. She stated that at some point she wanted to try and gauge the users satisfaction with the Seneca Helpdesk. She would like to know if the clerks and even employees at the bureau were satisfied with the response they receive when they call. If they are really providing the best service or if we could tweak that service to better serve our customers. She has been hearing concerns from some of the clerks and unfortunately they are not articulating their concerns in a very formal way, but it appears they do not feel that Seneca can answer their questions so they don't even bother to call or they are calling directly to the bureau. Ms. Little expressed the need to gauge their satisfaction and build their confidence that Seneca or whatever company we use is going to be able to help them.

Mr. O'Neal stated that he, Dr. Greenblatt and Mr. Bolton have a monthly management team meeting and that subject came up at this month's meeting. He wanted to make a couple of suggestions. First, he wants to have the Helpdesk Supervisor, Kimberly Taylor-Miller, attend the next meeting of this committee and the December training

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sessions. At the training sessions Ms. Taylor-Miller will explain Seneca to the users and will identify when and why they should be calling them. He also mentioned that someone from Mark's group goes to something called the Helpdesk Advisory Committee, which Ms. Taylor-Miller runs. It is made up of representatives from most if not all the divisions and it sets the direction of the helpdesk.

Mr. O'Neal suggested that someone from Vital Records attend those meetings. He would also like to bring Ms. Taylor-Miller to the User meetings scheduled for October. Mr. O'Neal feels that a major part of the problem is that we have not set user expectations. We haven't done a good job at disseminating the help desk information. Mr. Wurtz pointed out to Mr. O'Neal that the next User meetings would be held October 24. Mr. O'Neal replied that he would ask Ms. Taylor-Miller to attend.

2. Records Preservation Subcommittee:

Dr. Mevers informed the Chair that he was much more enthusiastic at present than he had been in meetings over the last year. Bringing the committee up to date he reminded them that two years ago the Dartmouth Library group came up with a project for archival education in New Hampshire. They asked the NHPRC (National Historical Publications and Records Commission) of the national archives for \$225,000 to underwrite that proposal. The state historical records advisory board approved that project proposal and sent it on to the National Archives. They commission responded that \$225,000 was too much money and returned it to Dartmouth for amendment.

Dartmouth revised their plan and lowered the amount to something the National Archives would entertain and somewhat to their surprise on the Historical Records Board, the National Archives funded the Dartmouth project to the tune of \$117,000. That came through sometime in late May. In the trimming of their budget for that project the Dartmouth committee had to cut back in a number of areas where they had hoped to make accomplishments. Dr. Mevers and the subcommittee believe that record keepers around the state will greatly benefit from this project. They also feel that the vital records part of the project will reflect back on this committee and vital records will be an integral part of this project.

Dr. Mevers stated that there is no doubt about it because all the early records prior to 1858 do contain vital records information in each town and municipality. They believe that the committee will feed information that we can use back to this committee and back to the bureau during the course of the project. There were several important items that had to be cut from the budget to get the total monies down to an agreeable amount for the National Archives. Dr. Mever proposed that the VRIF committee take \$20,000 of the \$50,000 currently in the preservation fund and supplement the Dartmouth project. This would allow them to continue with four particular areas that had been cut back. Dr. Mevers added that smaller groups throughout the state have also donated funds to the project.

He reminded the committee of Mr. Daley's presentation to them in May of 2000. Dr. Mevers stated that this project has the full support of the State Historical Records Advisory Board and he hopes the Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee as well. It is his opinion that this will generate some working knowledge and enthusiasm among the localities that keep the records. He stated that this committee had started it a

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few years earlier when it had hired Mr. Peter Parker to write a report. He went to thirty-four towns and provided a great deal of information to the committee. The kind of information that was gathered will be substantially increased by the Dartmouth project going into many other towns.

Dr. Mevers made a motion that the committee approves the use of up to \$20,000 out of the preservation fund over the course of the next sixteen months to supplement items dealing with the Dartmouth project. Ms. Little asked if there was a second. Mr. Kruger replied with a second and asked if he might comment on the motion. Mr. Kruger stated that while the records they are preserving are not exclusively vital records they are as Dr. Mevers suggested, so intertwined it would be difficult to separate them. Mr. Kruger believes that \$20,000 is a relatively small percentage of the overall expenditure of this project. Vital Records are a bigger percentage of the project than the \$20,000 supplement Dr. Mevers is suggesting.

Mr. Kruger also stated that he takes comfort in the knowledge that three members of this committee are on the Advisory Board for the Dartmouth project. Those members are: Dr. Mevers, Mr. Paul Bergeron and himself. Mr. Kruger believes there is a good overlap of objectives and that he, Mr. Bergeron and Dr. Mevers would be able to ensure the monies are fairly spent supporting vital records.

Dr. Greenblatt asked if the committee could delay the vote on this measure. As a non-member of the committee, he is concerned with the financial issues that may surround this type of an allocation. His understanding was that without a specific legislative authority to grant a single institution these monies, the committee would have to form a RFP or contract in which to do that. There are also requirements for some sort of competitive bid process. He stated that "obviously Dartmouth is in a position to be a sole service provider for these kinds of services", but he wants to ask the committee to wait on this so it can be investigated just how we could make the financial relationship work.

The point that Dr. Greenblatt wanted to make was that it is his understanding that in regard to vital records preservation, we are finishing with supporting towns that had previously been awarded money that had been set aside, but this \$50,000 is not being utilized in its entirety in a dramatic manner. If there is a thought that an additional funding rather than the \$20,000 would be helpful to Dartmouth maybe we should also investigate that as well.

Mr. Bolton asked what other six or eight entities had donated to the project. He asked if any other state agency had donated. Dr. Mevers replied that no other state agency had donated. The one donor that stuck in his mind was Johnson and Dix oil. The other donors were businesses. Dr. Mevers reiterated that his motion was to set aside up to \$20,000 for the use of this committee for preservation in order to supplement the Dartmouth grant. He stated that Dartmouth is not expecting the committee to just turn over a check for \$20,000 to them. One of the parts of the project that he would like the committee to supplement is the printing of leaflets developed through two other NHPRC projects in Iowa and Georgia. They are very informational and the committee is hoping to print at minimum, one thousand of each, with New Hampshire information.

The project team would like to hand them out to town officials, the general public and to people all over that oversee records. He was hoping that through the fund the committee could pay for the printing of the four leaflets over time. The amounts would not be

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enormous and he was hoping we could pay them without going through the state bureaucracy. Dr. Greenblatt stated that he believes we would all like to be supportive of that, but again asked for the committee's patience while the matter is investigated a little further. For someone to find out what the financial aspects that the committee should consider in order to make this expenditure possible and report that back to the committee.

Mr. Kruger stated that he recognized the need for that kind of process but he did not feel a vote needed to be held up. He went on to say that it was not as if the committee would decide to approve the motion today and write out a \$20,000 check tomorrow. He felt the committee does need to know the process to get the check written but he was ready to say that yes, he thinks it is money we should be spending, up to the \$20,000. He added that it was back to the question he had posed earlier, "who are the final arbiters as to how we spend the money out of the fund?" He felt he was hearing a little less control than he was led to believe by this committee.

The bureaucracy around the spending of money while he recognized there was a need for some and maybe all, he is finding that he doesn't fully understand who actually approves the cutting of checks. He added that he does not believe the committee should just write out and hand over a \$20,000 check. He reiterated that this was not at all the case with Dr. Mevers motion. Dr. Greenblatt replied that he wanted the committee to know that it is the department's intent to be as supportive as possible. He was just nervous how we could make that financial relationship exist without having to go through the exhaustive process. Dr. Greenblatt did not oppose the committee passing the intention of the motion.

He advised the committee that he would look into the situation and report back to them on the financial aspect of it. Mr. Kruger asked who actually writes the check. Dr. Greenblatt replied that the Department's financial staff writes checks but that he and Mr. Bolton would be responsible. Mr. Kruger asked if it would be a New Hampshire check. Dr. Greenblatt replied that it would. Dr. Mevers added that the reason they would appreciate knowing the committee's intent is that the project is underway and Washington is expecting results. The first workshop is actually scheduled for Keene in early November.

He was asked to discuss four different aspects. One is the printing of the leaflets, another is the reprinting of several general booklets that have been selected, one is the underwriting of tuition costs for town clerks to attend the workshops and the last is a training video the entire board is behind. Mr. Kruger stated that he felt that each of those items fit with the spirit and the letter of this franchise. Mr. Kruger added that he would like to vote on it, subject to Dr. Greenblatt letting the committee know what hoops they would need to jump through to get it done. Dr. Greenblatt asked Dr. Mevers who would be the best person to talk with regarding the specifics of bills that the committee might see.

Dr. Mevers explained that at the moment he would be the person to speak with. The Historical Records Advisory Board also has an ongoing grant from the NHPRC. It is a very small supplemental administrative support grant which gives him a person there for one to two hours a day during the work week. Between that person and Dr. Mevers they intend to help Dartmouth with some of the mechanics. He believes that between Himself and Dartmouth they can get the text ready to be printed, get them printed and he is not sure if maybe the state printer could do them and pay the bill. Dr. Greenblatt expressed

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an interest in the committee paying for them directly and avoid some of the procedures. Dr. Mevers stated that that had been his hope. He went on to say that he hoped that no more than one or two of the bills would be a large enough to warrant going through the council. Dr. Greenblatt informed him that anything over \$2500 would need to be approved.

If the amounts are within that we could maybe do it in an easier manner. He advised Dr. Mever that he would ask Mr. Andrew to call him to discuss details. Ms. Little asked if there was even a quorum in order to vote. Mr. Bolton replied that the committee is supposed to be eleven people, but he only sees ten listed members and of those, five are here. Ms. Little asked about the number of members and he replied that legislatively there are supposed to be eleven members. Mr. Bolton suggested that Dr. Mever discuss the financial situation with Mr. Andrew and the committee hold a vote at the next meeting. He then inquired if that was acceptable to Dr. Mever. Dr. Mever said that it was as long as he knew that the committee was agreeable to it.

Ms. Little offered that she felt the committee would definitely support his motion and that she was very excited about it. Dr. Mever asked if there was such a thing as a telephone poll. Mr. Bolton replied that yes, we could do a telephone poll of absent members. They would have to decide without benefit of the discussion but it could be done. Mr. Bolton asked Ms. Little if she wanted him to look into the quorum issue. Dr. Greenblatt suggested that a committee can decide on what a quorum is for itself. Mr. Kruger suggested that Mr. Bolton also look into telephonic and Email quorums. What constitutes a meeting? Can a meeting be held by telephone? Mr. Bolton added that we had previously done a telephone poll. Mr. Kruger felt that at the next meeting or when there is a majority of members present the committee should, on the record say that it has set its own internal guidance as to what constitutes a quorum and whether a telephone poll is binding. Ms. Little said that we have had telephonic polls in the past. Mr. Kruger replied that they had not been formalized and should be.

Ms. Little stated that there was a motion on the floor and would it be the will of the five members present that the committee show its support. Mr. Kruger replied that he would like to do that and asked that someone poll the other members of the committee before Dr. Mever commits any monies to Dartmouth. Time is getting short and the sooner the committee decides the better for Dr. Mevers. Ms. Little called a vote on Dr. Mevers motion to supplement up to \$20,000 the Dartmouth project over the next sixteen months. The members in attendance voted to approve the motion. A phone poll conducted later in the day by the bureau provided unanimous support to the motion.

3. Funding Update:

Ms. Little asked Dr. Greenblatt if there was any further news on the committee's \$200,000. Dr. Greenblatt replied that this is an issue that will probably require more action on the part of the committee. He reminded the committee that at the last meeting he offered to approach his senior management and other administrators in the department to see what could be done to address this issue of the \$200,000 that was dedicated for operating expenses of the bureau from the fund that appeared to be a difference in what the committee understood to be authority for RSA:126.

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The answer he has received thus far is that the department's hands are tied. That because house bill 1, which the budget passed under in 2001 carries equal weight with the department as RSA:126 they have to assume that the intention of the legislature was definitive and we cannot assume that it was not in the expenditure of our funds.

In addition, they have to assume that not expending the funds according their wishes would be going against their authority. As a consequence the department feels that if there is a sense that this issue needs to be addressed further the committee needs to make its intentions known directly to the legislature to get it resolved. Mr. Kruger remarked that Dr. Greenblatt had predicted this outcome at the last meeting. Dr. Greenblatt replied that he had hoped they could figure out a way around it, but unfortunately that did not happen. The chief financial officer of the department does not feel it is appropriate for the department to do more.

Ms. Little asked if the committee did decide to go forward with this and asked for that \$200,000 be put toward web enablement, wouldn't that leave the department with a \$200,000 deficit in general operating expenses. Dr. Greenblatt and Mr. Kruger replied that it would. Ms. Little stated that she didn't want to do that. Dr. Greenblatt replied that the best answer for the department would be if it was restored to the original intent of RSA:126 and he thinks you would find the department would support any initiative the committee put forward to that effect.

He also stated that the department did not want to find itself with a \$200,000 hole in its funding. Mr. Kruger added that the only way we are going to get out of this is through legislative action and that did not surprise him. Ms. Little commented that the committee did not need to decide anything on that issue at that meeting. It will be more of an issue as the new year approaches and should be discussed when all committee members are present. Mr. Kruger stated that the committee needs to consider if it is even a battle they want to fight.

Ms. Little replied that she was mainly concerned with the precedent this was setting. She does not want the legislature to begin to think that the fund is supporting general operating expenditures. Dr. Greenblatt commented that from their perspective and moving into a new budget cycle the fund is looking pretty robust and high in cash. He feels that the committee needs to encumber the funds that are mostly designated to web enablement at this point so that they don't become a chopping block item during the next session. He agrees that it up to the committee to decide whether they want to take on that battle or making it a larger issue by making sure the fund is looking balanced. Mr. Kruger mentioned that this issue had come up at the last meeting. That the fund is reasonable large and visible and people would be looking at the fund and saying if you can't spend it, we can.

4. Electronic Death Registration:

Mr. Bolton informed the committee that the bureau had submitted a proposal to the Social Security Administration in the amount of \$497,000 to contract with them so we can web enable our death registration process and provide twenty-four hour communication with them of our death events and online verification. He participated in a conference call several weeks ago and responded to some of their concerns and in a week and a half we will know the outcome. Dr. Greenblatt added that the fact that they

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had a conference call to discuss the budget with us was a very positive sign so we are excited and think we may have an additional source of funding for our web enablement project. Mr. Bolton reported that another good sign is that the people that are involved on the SSA side are the people that visited us during the EDR review. They went around to six states, one of which was New Hampshire and those same people are the ones reviewing the RFP.

5. Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2001

6. Additional Business:

With no additional business noted, Ms. Little adjourned the meeting.