

***VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE***  
*To The New Hampshire Department of State*

***- MINUTES -***

***Friday***

***April 24, 2015***

**-MINUTES-**

**Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting**

April 24, 2015

Archives & Records Building  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room  
71 South Fruit Street  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301-2410

***COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:***

David Scanlan, Deputy Secretary of State, SOS Appointment  
Stephen M. Wurtz, State Registrar  
Tricia Piccuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Joanne Linxweiler, Auburn Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Nicole Bottai, Windham Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Brook Dupee, DHHS Appointment  
Bruce Riddle, Data User, DHHS Appointment  
Ashley Conley, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment

***COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:***

Brian Burford, State Archivist  
Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment  
Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment  
Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment  
Janice Bonenfant, Concord City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment  
Erin Piazza, Health Information Specialist, NHHA Appointment  
Peter Morin, Funeral Director Association Appointment

***GUESTS:***

Chris Bentzler, SOS IT  
Laurie Harrigan, SOS IT  
Nicholl Marshall, Vital Records

## **1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Approval of Minutes:**

- Ms. Tricia Piecuch called the meeting to order at 09:33 with a quorum present.
- Ms. Piecuch welcomed a new member of the Committee, Ms. Nicole Bottai, the town clerk of Windham, who is taking the seat of Ms. Debra Clark, who has resigned. Introductions were made.
- Ms. Piecuch asked the Committee to review the minutes of the January 23 meeting, and the minutes of the January 29 meeting. Ms. Joanne Linxweiler made a motion to approve the minutes of both the January 23 meeting and the January 29 meeting, seconded by Dr. Brook Dupee. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the minutes were approved.

## **2. IT Update (NHVRIN Support & Maintenance):**

- Ms. Laurie Harrigan said that after the previous meeting, where the Committee approved moving forward with the support and maintenance contract, DVRA signed the contract on February 27 for a one-year period with an option to renew for two additional one-year periods. The contract also includes the legacy records conversion. DVRA is exceedingly happy with the service received from CNSI. DVRA and CNSI had a kick-off meeting in the Archives & Records Building on March 17, and topics of discussion were structure and support. Two developers are now working on the account: one quality assurance specialist who reviews the code before DVRA sees it, and a developer who worked on a customized issue tracking system built in Share Point. Ms. Harrigan and Mr. Chris Bentzler launched an effort to review the old Department of Information Technology (DoIT) list of 418 change requests which was reduced to 90. CNSI helped DVRA to import those outstanding issues into the system.
- Mr. Stephen Wurtz added that this has been a cohesive team, that things are accomplished when meetings take place, and DVRA is seeing movement. Mr. Bentzler added that CNSI has been receptive and responsive; CNSI has acted almost immediately to every request DVRA has submitted.
- Ms. Harrigan stated that as CNSI's quality assurance specialist find issues, they are entering their own defects to examine later, resulting in documented business rules. Mr. Bentzler added that DVRA is seeing the issues which CNSI is finding because Share Point opens all the issues to the whole group.
- Dr. Dupee asked if this was the existing system; Ms. Harrigan responded in the affirmative. Dr. Dupee asked if DVRA was getting support that was excellent; Ms. Harrigan responded in the affirmative.

- Ms. Piecuch added that legacy marriages can be entered by town/city clerks, but town/city clerks are unable to print legacy marriages. Mr. Bentzler explained that state users have a similar function, called “Key In and Verify” and state users had that same problem when it came to printing legacy marriages. Mr. Wurtz added that “Key In and Verify” was creating two records, one with a state file number and one without a state file number. Mr. Bentzler said CNSI corrected that but it created problems for the town/city clerks.
- Ms. Harrigan added that when DVRA submitted this issue, CNSI responded within half an hour. Ms. Piecuch said it is great to hear that DVRA is getting such great customer support. Mr. Wurtz added that previously when an error occurred, DVRA would have to try to duplicate that error and get screen shots of it to prove to DoIT that was a real error; now Mr. Bentzler can go directly to the back end and find the error code which caused the problem, thus saving time doing research. Ms. Harrigan said that data changes are implemented immediately, but changes in code are being prioritized and DVRA is working with CNSI to have standard releases.
- Dr. Dupee suggested that the vendor should be thanked as notes of thanks are often displayed on social media. Ms. Piecuch agrees that such a note of thanks from the Committee should be passed on to CNSI.

### **3. IT Update – Special Legacy Data Entry Project:**

- Ms. Harrigan said DVRA is looking into taking the paper legacy records which are not presently in NHVRIN and work with CNSI to build an optical character recognition (OCR) program which will scan them in. A kick-off meeting for this project was also held on March 17, and many ideas were discussed. CNSI suggested attaching the scans to NHVRIN so that when a record is searched, one can look at it online. Ms. Harrigan added that this is similar to what is done in the Corporations Division. Ms. Harrigan continued that the requirements for this project were not just defined, but enhanced. Two people from CNSI were shown some of the records in question and found that there were more double-sided forms than anticipated, thus resulting in the need for a duplex scanner rather than a single-sided scanner. With all of the amendments considered, it was thought best that two scanners be obtained. Ms. Harrigan said that CNSI must now come to DVRA with a proposal for the cost of the scanners and a lease-or-buy option. When the scanners are decided, CNSI will work with Mr. Bentzler and Mr. Dave Fournier to set up connectivity and run a pilot program of 250 selected records to ensure the scanners are working with at least an 80%-85% success rate; if the success rate is less than that, an evaluation will occur.

- Ms. Piecuch asked if these 250 records did not have amendments. Ms. Harrigan answered that they did have amendments and the records were selected by DVRA.
- Ms. Harrigan had expected the scanners to be here already, but they are not, so she said that she will try to get the scanners here soon. Mr. Bentzler added that the scanners are very high-end.
- Ms. Piecuch noted that during the last meeting, \$700,000 was set aside for this project. Ms. Harrigan said that is still the target cost.

#### **4. IT Update – Marriage Module & SB201:**

- Mr. Bentzler said that a release was made in February to accommodate the new marriage statute and another release was made in March to resolve the problem regarding amendments. Since then one ODAR to fix entering abstract records by the State was completed, and another ODAR to fix the problem the clerks are seeing should be completed soon. The next phase of the project is to bring everything together again, as there are now two versions of NHVRIN; CNSI had been working on the upgrade of all other modules, which originally was thought could be completed simultaneously, but NHVRIN had not been upgraded since the 2003 .net application. Each module must go through this upgrade process. DVRA sees through Share Point all of the upgrade issues which DVRA would have found but CNSI is finding them and resolving them. The goal is to have a May release where NHVRIN is in one piece.
- Mr. Wurtz asked if it is customary to be frozen in 2003 .net technology or should the upgrades have occurred throughout the life cycle of the application. Mr. Bentzler responded that not necessarily every iteration should have been done, but one or two could have been done during this life cycle. Reviewing through documentation, DVRA discovered that DoIT attempted to do a migration at one time to get to the 2005 version of .net, but DoIT ran into so many issues that they stopped pursuing it. Mr. Bentzler further explained that DVRA can not get to newer versions of Internet Explorer because of compatibility problems, especially in the death module. CNSI has seen this and in the process of correcting it on a programming level, not a settings level.
- Ms. Piecuch asked if this fix will take care of all the users in all problems. Mr. Bentzler answered that DVRA has not yet received a release to do a test, but he is looking forward to finding out. DVRA identified those issues which need to be corrected, and they are considered priority.

- Dr. Dupee asked how DVRA is addressing the multiple browser issue. Mr. Bentzler answered that he works with most NHVRIN users to utilize Internet Explorer 8 because that is the best version in which NHVRIN works, but some funeral directors have application which require another version of Internet Explorer. Thus Mr. Bentzler often finds a personal computer which a funeral director uses for NHVRIN and another personal computer for their other work. Dr. Dupee notes that the state Department of Health & Human Services run different browsers, thus asking if NHVRIN is going to run only on Internet Explorer; Mr. Bentzler answered in the affirmative, although the long term plan is to have NHVRIN work in Chrome and Firefox. Ms. Harrigan added that once CNSI addresses the Change Requests (CRs) concerning operation, then it is possible to move to enhancements, which are the next priority.
- Ms. Bottai notes that in the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), there have much VPN in that, thus asks if something has been explored in NHVRIN, such as a town clerk computer and a funeral director computer going back and forth. Mr. Wurtz offered that DMV had a very expensive connection with the town clerks, and the VPN solution was to stop some expense. NHVRIN has no expense. The choice of a funeral director to have multiple computers is minor because they choose to have multiple computers. NHVRIN will work but it takes constant maintenance each time Microsoft performs an update on Internet Explorer. Mr. Bentzler added that NHVRIN is a web-based application accessible from anywhere. Going to VPN would require an extra log-on and more work for state staff. Mr. Bentzler also added that there were once 165 personal computers provided from the State of the towns; now it is 109, a decrease a town get new equipment and are budgeted for new devices. Ms. Linxweiler asked if the State is still providing computers to towns; Mr. Bentzler responded in the affirmative.

##### **5. IT Update – Birth Abstract Table Conversion to NHVRIN:**

- Mr. Bentzler said that as town clerks enter in old birth records into NHVRIN, they are placed in the abstract table. Now there is a large number of records in the abstract table and, with the help of the Database Administrator and NHVRIN staff, the goal is to find a way to get that information into NHVRIN. Presently, DVRA staff must go to each record and manually go through a correction process to get them into the system; the goal is to automate that and clean up the data.
- Ms. Picuch said she preferred the data re-keyed by DVRA staff to ensure the data is correct in the first place. Mr. Wurtz responded that DVRA do know this information, but it is in an r-base program that was not designed for anything except indexing. For example, a birth abstract has a number of data elements; DVRA has almost all, perhaps all, of those data elements. So the first phase is to

merge the abstract table and the r-base table, thus it gets converted with a state file number and is placed into the database. The second phase addressed the rejects: the rejects could be multiples (the same record on the abstract table) which have to be manually match to the actual record, or the rejects could be records with too many data elements missing. Any residuals that can not be matched will be deleted from the abstract table.

- Ms. Piecuch recalls records from a couple of decades ago where the name of the hospital on the record was truncated. Ms. Harrigan explained that Microsoft Excel will be used to filter those fields which are necessary. Mr. Wurtz further explained that an advantage of getting those abstract records into the database is that edit tools can be used to correct them. Ms. Harrigan said that DVRA is working with Mr. Jeff King, whom was praised by Ms. Harrigan for his skills as the database administrator. Ms. Piecuch added that this is important because the goal is trying to make this data available to all cities and towns.
- Ms. Piecuch asked if this project involves only the birth module. Mr. Bentzler clarified that this is the first phase in the process, and Mr. Wurtz continued that birth is the biggest part in this process.
- Dr. Dupee asked if the death data could be fixed; Mr. Wurtz explained that once the records outside NHVRIN are put into NHVRIN, then DVRA can make many queries on that database. Dr. Dupee asked if this included the data presently in NHVRIN as he estimates there must be about forty spellings of “Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center” in NHVRIN now. Ms. Harrigan responded that it is a project unto itself and Mr. Wurtz explained that a drop-down menu does exist for that field so that means someone is not using the drop-down menu to select Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center but selecting “Other” and typing the facility in the free text box. Mr. Wurtz also said that he mentions this during funeral director meetings. Dr. Dupee said that he is examining the death records from 1995 to 2014 and used a system which recalculated three thousand ages which were supposedly incorrect, however the system does not indicate which records they are; it also identified seventeen hundred people who had what the system felt to be identical records, but when one looks at them, the pairs of records were close by not exact. But Dr. Dupee does say that a bigger problem will be Social Security numbers. Mr. Wurtz said that a New Hampshire death certificate requires a Social Security number unless it is refused to be given. Dr. Dupee said the State of Texas performed a study in their database on how many people shared Social Security numbers and found that about six percent were using someone else’s Social Security number, and a staggering percentage of people had multiple Social Security numbers, some of them were off by three or four digits.

## **6. IT Update – Help Desk:**

- Mr. Bentzler said that the transition away from SENECA was fine and that things are going well with DVRA as the help desk. Ms. Piecuch asked if DVRA was still charged for telephone calls; Mr. Bentzler responded in the negative.

## **7. IT Update – NHVRINWeb Update:**

- Mr. Wurtz said that Committee had approved \$50,000 to be spent so that the vendor may improve NHVRINWeb, the public facing website providing statistical data on New Hampshire vital events. Mr. Wurtz adds that for almost two years, NHVRINWeb has not received updated data, thus it needs to be fixed. One possibility is that NHVRINWeb may be migrated off from the 2003 server and be housed on a Department of State server. Converting from Oracle to SQL is still being considered. It is estimated that this project could last eight months. Ms. Piecuch says that a message should be put up on the website.

## **8. VRIFAC Budget:**

- Ms. Piecuch invited Mr. Scanlan to discuss the VRIFAC budget. Mr. Scanlan indicated that savings are starting to grow with the move away from DoIT. However, the NetSmart issue is still hanging. The Department of State has about seven or eight lawsuits, and most of them have to do with elections. NetSmart shall be addressed soon. Ms. Piecuch asked if Mr. Scanlan has presented the budget before the state legislature; Mr. Scanlan responded in the negative, but he heard that the state senate will not raid dedicated funds.

## **9. Old business – Netsmart:**

- Ms. Harrigan has created a list of showstoppers, which are issues that if implemented in a software package created by any vendor for DVRA, DVRA would not accept the software. Ms. Piecuch asked if the plan was that NetSmart would be given another shot at creating a product for DVRA. Ms. Harrigan responded that DVRA is waiting for an answer from the state attorney general's office to determine how to proceed. Ms. Harrigan reiterated that during the time NetSmart was the vendor for DVRA, NetSmart repeatedly failed to resolve certain issues and concerns raised by DVRA.

#### **10. Old business – EDR at time of Disaster:**

- Ms. Ashley Conley restated what she mentioned at the previous meeting about this topic. Mr. Wurtz added that the Centers for Disease Control did not properly code Hurricane Sandy as a cause for some of the deaths on the coasts of New York and New Jersey when that storm hit in 2012. Dr. Dupee stated that he was glad he had nominated Ms. Conley for the Committee. Ms. Harrigan noted that this could be another funding opportunity.
- Dr. Dupee said to Mr. Wurtz that he would like to discuss problems in the death data which he has observed. Dr. Riddle mentioned that he attended a presentation on Hurricane Katrina, where he learned that some people could not get a death certificate for deaths related to Hurricane Katrina for up to one and a half years. Ms. Conley related a similar example regarding tornadoes.

#### **11. New business – SOS Invoicing Replacement:**

- Mr. Wurtz indicated that the reporting of vital records revenue from the towns to the state does have some deficiencies. These deficiencies will be fixed in the new NHVRIN. The KB system at the Department of State is expected to go away soon. There is an invoicing component in NHVRIN, but this component was never finished or validated. Mr. Wurtz asked that this module in NHVRIN be explored; perhaps a brand new reconciliation module is needed. Ms. Piecuch said that NHVRIN is accurate. Ms. Harrigan explained that adjustment figures do not tie back in to NHVRIN, so that functionality should have been built into NHVRIN. Mr. Wurtz said that he monitors monthly aging reports he gets from the Department of State indicating which towns have not paid their bills, and if a town does not pay for two months, Mr. Wurtz sends an electronic mail message to the town, but most of those messages involve only small amounts.
- Dr. Dupee asked if NHVRIN is only New Hampshire specific; Mr. Wurtz responded in the affirmative. Dr. Dupee asked what the Department of State will do when the KB system is removed; Ms. Harrigan responded that the contract with the current vendor has a new invoicing component. Ms. Piecuch suggested that the NHVRIN system be fixed first. Ms. Harrigan said that Ms. Nancy Swett will get involved and that \$265,000 is dedicated to NHVRIN maintenance and enhancement. Ms. Piecuch opined that this should be the first objective and that the training module should be the second objective.
- Dr. Riddle mentioned that he would like to see how funeral directors enter death information fixed. Ms. Piecuch explained that funeral directors are not part of this project because clerks are responsible for invoicing. Ms. Piecuch added that

in a conversation with DVRA staff earlier today, much safety paper is wasted because of mistaken information of decedents through informants, such as Social Security numbers, or through the physician.

- Mr. Wurtz said that because this is an enhancement, no approval is necessary from the Committee. Ms. Piecuch added that it is correct so long as it stays within the \$265,000 allocated for enhancement and maintenance, but if for some reason it goes above that allocation, the Committee can vote the additions funds necessary for completion.

**12. Next meeting & adjournment:**

- Ms. Piecuch said the next meeting date would be August 28 instead of the Friday before Labor Day. Dr. Dupee made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Linxweiler seconded the motion. No discussion was made on the motion. The vote was taken, and all were in favor; the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 11:15.