VITAL RECORDS IMPROVEMENT FUND
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

To The New Hampshire Department of State

- MINUTES -

Thursday

January 29, 2015

-MINUTES-

Vital Records Improvement Fund Advisory Committee Meeting

January 29, 2015

Archives & Records Building
2nd 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 Piecuch, Nashua City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
      Joanne Linxweiler, Auburn Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
      Janice Bonenfant, Concord City Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
      Brian Burford, State Archivist
      Brook Dupee, DHHS Appointment
      Bruce Riddle, Data User, DHHS Appointment

COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED:

      Thomas A. Andrew, MD, Medical Examiner Appointment
      Nelson Allan, Public Member, SOS Appointment
      Theresa Pare-Curtis, OIT CIO Appointment
      Debra Clark, Charlestown Town Clerk, NHC&TC Association Appointment
      Ashley Conley, Municipal Data User, DHHS Appointment
      Erin Piazza, Health Information Specialist, NHHA Appointment
      Peter Morin, Funeral Director Association Appointment

GUESTS:

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

1. **Call to Order:**

- *Ms. Tricia Piecuch called the meeting to order at 09:34 with no quorum present.*

- *Ms. Piecuch thanked those who attended the meeting last week, despite no quorum, being present then, and those who are presently in attendance. Because no quorum was yet present, although a quorum was later expected, Ms. Piecuch changed the order of the agenda so that those issues requiring votes would be addressed later.*

2. **DVRA Help Desk:**

- *Mr. Chris Bentzler noted that DVRA has moved away from the SENECA help desk to using an internal help desk a few months ago. Now, NHVRIN users can call DVRA directly and receive support quickly, particularly on the password reset. An electronic mail address has been established so that NHVIRN users may contact support, so now issues can be resolved quickly and directly through e-mail instead of telephone calls. Since the shift away from SENECA in the previous autumn, there have been 85 calls which have been resolved through this system. The rate of calls has not changed much since the shift away from SENECA, but the new system has been helpful, and response from users has been positive. Mr. Bentzler added that nhvrintechsupport@sos.nh.gov is the e-mail address.*

- *Mr. Dan Cloutier observes the Department has paid for about half a dozen calls from users to SENECA, at about nineteen dollars per call, but the Department has told SENECA that starting December 1, the Department will not pay SENECA anymore, so SENECA should send such calls to DVRA.*

- *Ms. Piecuch asked if there was a breakdown by type of NHVRIN user about who contacts DVRA for NHVRIN support. Mr. Bentzler said he did not have that breakdown, but he does have a breakdown by types of issues.*

- *Ms. Joanne Linxweiler asked how often updates are performed on weekends. Ms. Linxweiler also asked if an e-mail can be sent to the town/city clerks when such an update is performed. Ms. Linxweiler cited an example when she came into her town hall on a weekend to get into NHVRIN, but had not seen the announcement in NHVRIN until Monday morning that the system would be down for the weekend; she also observed that some town/city clerks, particularly those of small towns do not utilize NHVRIN every day. Mr. Stephen Wurtz said that NHVRIN is rarely down on weekend but acknowledges that on the occasions when NHVRIN is planned to be down or otherwise unavailable, this should be communicated in a better way.*

3. Old Business - NetSmart:

- *Mr. David Scanlan said that NetSmart has threatened to sue the State for backing out of the agreement which the parties had. The Department met with NetSmart about two weeks ago, and NetSmart had brought a team of executives and lawyers. Mr. Scanlan said that it was agreed that NetSmart would be given another chance to convince the Department that NetSmart could meet the Department's needs. Mr. Scanlan added that NetSmart was willing to make an investment into their product in a way that could accommodate what the Department wants. If NetSmart can not, the situation remains the same. Mr. Scanlan added that neither side pushed the other side into a corner. He has learned through involvement with another contractual agreement is that by the time all parties exhaust their resources, a winning party does not end up with much anyway.*

- *Ms. Piecuch asked if NetSmart feels they can rectify some of the problems as there were so many problems encountered. Mr. Scanlan emphasized that NetSmart wants another shot and they are willing to spend money, without billing the State, to make improvements. Mr. Scanlan added that it was NetSmart's core product which seems to be the problem because they could not deliver the functionality which DVRA currently has. Thus when Mr. Scanlan learned that NetSmart is willing to make an investment, he interprets that as NetSmart would upgrade the core product so that it could deliver the functionality which DVRA currently has. Ms. Piecuch concluded that if NetSmart does upgrade the product in that way, it would be better in the long term for NetSmart because NetSmart could market that better product.*

- *Ms. Laurie Harrigan said that the Department is reviewing all of the correspondence in which DVRA enumerated the core issues which were not meeting the needs of DVRA and resubmit them to NetSmart. Ms. Harrigan added that a meeting has been arranged for next week.*

- *Mr. Cloutier added that the contract includes as escalation clause which goes up to the president of NetSmart and to Mr. Scanlan. If those two could not come to a resolution, a third-party arbiter could be obtained. Dr. Bruce Riddle says many contracts he signs with vendors require arbitration but no right to sue; Mr. Cloutier says the feature which Dr. Riddle cited is not in the contract with NetSmart.*

4. **New business – NHVRIN Web Overhaul:**

- *Mr. Stephen Wurtz said that about two or three years ago, there was a discussion about overhauling NHVRIN Web. When it was decided to replace NHVRIN, it was also decided that replacing NHVRIN Web would be a part of that project. NHVRIN Web is no longer the quality tool it used to be because some updates have not been applied to it. In order for NHVRIN Web to be useful, the way it pulls information from NHVRIN needs to be upgraded. Mr. Wurtz suggested a possibility might be to take NHVRIN Web down so that it can be afforded the upgrade necessary. Years ago, a private vendor supported that service, and was not supported by the State's Department of Information Technology (DoIT). When DVRA dealt with NetSmart, NetSmart relied on that other vendor for information about how NHVRIN Web was being populated. But now, it is not being updated correctly.*

- *Ms. Piecuch asked what would be the cost estimate to overhaul NHVRIN Web. Mr. Wurtz did not have that information, but believes it is about $50,000. Mr. Wurtz offered to consult previous minutes to find out, but the estimate is probably older than the Request For Proposal to which NetSmart had responded. Mr. Cloutier said that Mr. John Castella may have been involved with this, but Mr. Wurtz does not recall.*

- A quorum has now been achieved.

- Ms. Janice Bonenfant asked what taking down NHVRIN Web means for NHVRIN users. Mr. Wurtz explained that NHVRIN Web is a public facing application which allows researchers to have access to New Hampshire statistical information. Over the years, DVRA would get telephone calls from researchers, such as school districts asking for projections several years from now. NHVRIN Web allows researchers to learn for themselves, but if NHVRIN Web is not being updated correctly, then NHVRIN Web may be offering false statistics.

- Mr. Wurtz asked Dr. Brook Dupee if the state Department of Health & Human Services has a public facing tool. Dr. Dupee answered that DHHS does have the WISDOM tool, but one can not get the same data in WISDOM as in NHVRIN Web.

- Ms. Bonenfant speculated how long it would take to update NHVRIN Web or if NetSmart should go forward with updating NHVRIN Web. Ms. Piecuch asked if NHVRIN Web was part of the RFP; Mr. Cloutier and Mr. Wurtz responded in the affirmative. Mr. Cloutier added that it used Oracle right now and the goal is to

move NHVRIN Web to SQL, so it may be logical from a financial standpoint to wait to update NHVRIN Web, but it would not be convenient for researchers.

- Ms. Piecuch expressed concern about the Oracle to SQL conversion and believed NetSmart had difficulties with this specific conversion. Mr. Cloutier explained that the base methodology and data fields which NetSmart had in its product was not comparable to how NHVRIN stores data presently, so it was not simply a programming language conversion problem. Ms. Harrigan added that differences in data storage are likely to be a problem with any commercial off-the-shelf product, regardless of programming language.

- Ms. Piecuch asked if NetSmart would be given a chance to produce the entire package or something less such as a couple of modules. Ms. Harrigan answered that was to be determined, but Mr. Cloutier answered that it should be all or nothing. Ms. Piecuch recalled that some vendors were willing to create some of the modules but not all. Ms. Harrigan said a long-term strategy would be in the State's best interest. Ms. Piecuch replied if a module-by-module replacement was done along with the NHVRIN Web update, NHVRIN Web would be one of the last items to be addressed, perhaps two years, thus it may be better to address the NHVRIN Web issue now than in the long term.

- Mr. Scanlan made a motion authorizing Mr. Wurtz to expend about $50,000 to start upgrading NHVRIN Web, which was seconded by Mr. Brian Burford. A vote was taken: all in favor.

5. **Approval of Minutes:**

- Now that a quorum was achieved, Ms. Piecuch addressed accepting the previous minutes. Ms. Linxweiler moved to accept the July minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Wurtz. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the motion passed. Mr. Wurtz asked what should be done about the minutes from the meeting of January 23, even though it was not an official meeting due to a lack of a quorum. Ms. Piecuch had not seen those minutes yet, and said the minutes of January 23 can be addressed next meeting when addressing the minutes of the present meeting.

6. **VRIFAC Budget:**

- Ms. Piecuch invited Mr. Scanlan to discuss the budget. Ms. Piecuch asked if the state legislature has taken $800,000 out. Mr. Scanlan answered it appears the state legislature has not done so. Mr. Scanlan added that a potential $1 million liability to NetSmart did not appear in the budget which was presented to all in attendance; therefore if those two items are taken out, the balance of the Vital Records Improvement Fund for Fiscal Year-To-Date 2015 stands at about $2

million. Ms. Piecuch said that she was aware of a couple of Legislative Service Requests outstanding which addresses dedicated funds. Mr. Scanlan suggested that about $1 million of the fund should be dedicated for projects to be funded in the future.

7. **IT Update:**

- Ms. Harrigan said that the new marriage module which complies with SB201 is close to being finalized. The coding for the combination of names is more difficult that how it looks on paper, particularly with spaces and hyphens. A build was received last night and Mr. Bentzler deployed it this morning. Ms. Piecuch stayed in the Archives & Records Building after the meeting of January 23 and was amazed at the work being done. Ms. Harrigan added that the vendor, CNSI, was very transparent about working through various issues. The initial contract with CNSI was for $35,000 for this marriage module, and much effort was expended on a stable code base, but other items within SB201 have not been finished because of this reason. Ms. Harrigan proposed a maintenance and enhancement contract with CNSI which would finalize that work, because both NHVRIN and NHVRIN Web are still unsupported. Because CNSI is the original author of the code, CNSI can roll up their sleeves and jump in this work. The President of CNSI can call DVRA and update why something was done. Ms. Harrigan added that it is easy to talk to the president of CNSI and the developer. Mr. Bentzler added that there is no in-between person at CNSI, thus DVRA talks directly to the CNSI personnel involved.

- Ms. Harrigan said that there were a couple of other projects identified within the NHVRIN enhancement, such as converting legacy paper records into NHVRIN. Ms. Harrigan brought attention to NHVRIN Legacy Records Conversion Project Executive Summary, which all in attendance acquired upon arrival. Approximately 900,000 records need to be entered into NHVRIN, and the records have about 25 different formats varying by event and by year. Ms. Harrigan determined there is no existing state contract on which this project could piggyback. Temporary employees performing only data entry of these 900,000 records were also considered, but it would take about fifteen years to enter that data. CNSI has proposed an optical character recognition (OCR) process, where CNSI would build 25 different formats for all those forms and scan them; based on the quality of the documents, CNSI estimates a 90% hit rate of getting the information from paper to electronic format. Those documents which would not make it by optical scanning, CNSI proposed key-from-image (KFI), where the record would be entered based on the image created by the scanner. Ms. Piecuch asked how the scanner would properly layer the records, such as adoptions and

legal name changes. Mr. Wurtz recognized that there are a percentage of records which have an amendment, thus they would have to be keyed separately, requiring special attention. Mr. Wurtz said there are many benefits of this project. Mr. Wurtz also said NetSmart had been wrestling with getting old records with different formats into NHVRIN. It does not mean that a person who is seeking a vital record which is centuries old will be unable to get it. Ms. Linxweiler asked when a town clerk enters a record if it goes directly into NHVRIN. Mr. Wurtz explained that it does not go directly into the main table because there are still some processes which need to be done, but the town clerk will still have access to it, although no other town clerk has access to it yet.

- Ms. Piecuch stated that a training module needs to be in place. Mr. Wurtz said that the training module has been broken. Mr. Bentzler said the contract requires all instances to be in place such as UAT, training, and production. Ms. Harrigan says it is part of the process of getting them all on a final stable code base, which includes a server migration strategy, which will be referenced in the new contract. Mr. Bentzler added that this includes the new marriage module, which is its own entity and will be deployed soon, put back into one version of NHVRIN, and that version can be used across all instances. Thus it would be the same front-end application connecting to all the back-end databases. Ms. Linxweiler asked if town clerks can train deputies so long as DVRA supplies deputies with passwords; Mr. Wurtz responded in the affirmative.

- Ms. Harrigan said CNSI's estimate of the support and maintenance of NHVRIN would be up to $265,000 per year. The estimate of the OCR solution was about $583,000, but DVRA would have to expend another $10,000 for high-speed scanners, and going further into the statement of work phase, the total cost of OCR could be $650,000. Ms. Harrigan said that she envisioned the contract would have a one year period with an option to renew for two years at the discretion of DVRA. Mr. Wurtz said the contract will say that DVRA will tell the vendor how DVRA will expend the money. Ms. Harrigan added that Mr. Cloutier was cautious in reviewing the contract so that it was clear that DVRA would send the vendor a notice to proceed. Mr. Wurtz said that DVRA could decide to stay with some defects if legislation ever forced DVRA to give another issue higher priority. Ms. Harrigan added that the vendor must provide up front a statement of work, which would be an estimate of how much it would take to deliver what DVRA wants based upon specifications and requirements, then DVRA could make the decision to move forward.

- Ms. Linxweiler made a motion to spend $265,000 for the enhancement and support of NHVRIN in a one-year contract with CNSI with a notice to proceed for

two years afterwards. Mr. Burford seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the motion passed.

- Dr. Riddle asked if $650,000 was enough for the legacy records project. Ms. Harrigan answered that the $650,000 estimate was based on a 90% success rate with OCR; if there is a less than 90% success rate, then that would mean more records which had to be keyed into NHVRIN at the rate of sixteen dollars per hour. Ms. Piecuch suggested $700,000 may be a more comfortable estimate. Mr. Wurtz added that the local record may be handwritten, but the record may have been typed when it was sent to Concord. Mr. Wurtz added that a birth record prior to 1935 may only be issued a certified copy by photocopy instead of data entry. Ms. Piecuch added that problems may arise if names are crossed out on very old records. Mr. Scanlan added that once the records are digitized, they can be transferred to any program. Ms. Harrigan said that the digitized records will go into a flat file, and CNSI writes the program which will upload the information into NHVRIN. Mr. Wurtz added that the digitized data will be added to the Data Warehouse. Dr. Riddle said at the national level, commas were given up in favor of pipes, and pipes are not recognized characters in names in terms of delimited files.

- Ms. Linxweiler made a motion to spend up to $700,000 to enter about 900,000 legacy records and Dr. Riddle seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the motion passed.

- Ms. Harrigan added that in the contract, there was $38,000 built in for the analysis by CNSI of what it would take to migrate the data from Oracle to SQL.

- Mr. Cloutier said that the servers are based on Microsoft 2003, which everyone understands that DVRA disallowed XP machines to contact NHVRIN as the XP machines are no longer secured and updated. Microsoft will perform the last update of the Microsoft 2003 servers in July, therefore the NHVRIN servers need to be replaced. Mr. Cloutier continued that the plan is to build a virtualized environment so that servers can be created on the fly and have the back-up of a server if a server is acting up. Another software program for the Corporations Division is in a virtual environment in the Annex Building; a similar environment for DVRA is planned to be built here. Ms. Piecuch asked what would be the cost of the new servers; Mr. Cloutier responded that it should be less than $200,000. Mr. Cloutier reminded everyone that there are also two production web servers, database servers, various environments (such as UAT, development, training). Twelve servers will cost between $12,000 and $28,000 each including the software to run them, which is why Mr. Cloutier suggests the virtualized environment because DVRA can get more than twelve on the infrastructure being

designed. Ms. Piecuch asked if there is any place in the Archives & Records Building to store these servers; Mr. Cloutier responded that there is a computer room with a five-ton air conditioning unit. Dr. Riddle said that the state Department of Information Technology has its own virtual environment which is being offered to other departments, and wondered how that would compare with an internal solution. Mr. Cloutier responded that during the project with NetSmart, DVRA rented six servers from there. Mr. Cloutier added that DVRA deployed the STEVE and EVVE systems onto those virtualized servers. Mr. Cloutier had indicated to DoIT that DVRA will not need them by the end of June because DVRA will have their own environment. Mr. Cloutier said that DVRA is trying to remove itself from dependency of DoIT as DoIT will not let DVRA manage DVRA's own servers in that environment.

- Ms. Piecuch asked if DoIT hired a new person to take Peter's place; Mr. Cloutier said that a Steve has been named acting, but he was not sure if Steve had been named commissioner. Ms. Piecuch reminder everyone that a representative from DoIT is still on the Committee and perhaps legislation may be required to replace the DoIT member with an information technology professional from the Department of State. Mr. Cloutier added that while DoIT were performing tasks for DVRA and DVRA had a high priority on a particular issue, conflicting request from other Departments may have caused DoIT to place DVRA with less than high priority. Mr. Wurtz said that this migration to DVRA's own environment is a solution for the whole Department of State; Mr. Cloutier added that it would provide a backup and support layer for all divisions in the Department of State. Dr. Dupee asked if the server would be SQL 2012; Mr. Cloutier responded it would be either 2012 or 2014. Mr. Cloutier added that the $200,000 expense is to replace the servers, as Mr. Cloutier does not believe the conversion to SQL will take place by early summer. Small introductory training is provided for free and two individuals will attend training during February.

- Dr. Dupee made a motion to spend up to $200,000 for new servers and Mr. Burford seconded the motion. A vote was taken and all were in favor; the motion passed.

- Dr. Riddle asked if the servers were encrypted. Mr. Cloutier said servers were placed behind secure firewalls. Mr. Cloutier reminded all that the conversion from Oracle to SQL is not a requirement, but the DHHS Oracle servers are what they are; but once all of DVRA's servers are brought in-house, it would be best if DVRA have access to the data instead of sending requests to DoIT. Bringing Oracle in-house will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, largely because of licensing fees. An Oracle to SQL conversion will not be like a NetSmart

conversion, but instead will be a table-to-table complete replication. Mr. Cloutier also adds that the 64-bit transition has not yet been addressed, but the highest priority is the servers. Mr. Cloutier added that all of the Department of State's software, apart from NHVRIN, runs on Microsoft SQL. Mr. Cloutier said he is developing a chart which prioritizes tasks, such as the 64-bit enhancement to take the software into the new world, but it does not make sense to make the SQL move until the 64-bit move.

- Mr. Cloutier said that NHVRIN 2 planning is now focused on utilizing NetSmart or CNSI and the 64-enhancement. Ms. Piecuch was glad that CNSI was willing to get DVRA through the SB201 changes. Mr. Cloutier added that NHVRIN will have a good code base because spaghetti code will be eliminated. Ms. Piecuch said that it should not be like DoIT where DoIT fixed something and DVRA was not told what was fixed. Mr. Cloutier responded that it is also helpful to know if a fix is a subroutine fix versus a core fix and he thinks there were hundreds of subroutine fixes which were undocumented.

8. Old Business – Record Preservation:

- Ms. Piecuch said that Ms. Ashley Conley, who is not currently present, had e-mailed Mr. Wurtz about Electronic Death Registration during a disaster. Ms. Piecuch said that records preservation was mentioned during last meeting and that grant information is available on the website. Ms. Piecuch asked about Mr. Burford's plans regarding the research room; Mr. Burford answered that there has been no development since the prior meeting. Mr. Wurtz said that he took the research room off the agenda. Ms. Piecuch said that she would like to postpone discussion about record preservation until the next meeting.

- Dr. Dupee asked how people, such as members of the State legislature, can understand that most of the balance of the Vital Records Improvement Fund has been approved to be spent. Mr. Scanlan volunteered to make the State legislature aware of that. Mr. Scanlan suggested that Mr. Nicholl Marshall prepare the minutes of today's meeting sooner rather than later.

9. New business – Heirloom Birth Certificate:

- Ms. Piecuch said that she had a request from a clerk's office to be able to issue heirloom birth certificates because she understands that that clerk's municipality is looking for revenue. Ms. Piecuch realized that the heirloom birth certificate was designed by an artist, is not letter sized, and requires a special printer to produce it, so she told the clerk that she would bring it before the Committee. Ms. Piecuch says the law is clear that the State Registrar issues heirloom birth

certificates, but the clerk had wanted to know if the municipality could create their own type of certificate to issue themselves. Ms. Piecuch said that heirloom birth certificates are numbered and they must be accounted, therefore legislation would have to be changed.

- Mr. Wurtz added that such decorative documents have been out for years and hospitals had issued them, but over the years the decorative documents were confused to be certified birth certificates. Mr. Wurtz likes the statute which prohibits hospitals producing something that is not the official document. If a municipality wishes to produce its own decorative document, it is obviously not a legal document, but if it can be confused with a legal document, it can cause hardship to the consumer. DVRA gets telephone calls from people standing on a dock trying to get on board a cruise ship with a document which a hospital had produced, only to be told by the cruise line that it is nothing but paper with fancy writing. If the municipality's notion of producing heirloom birth certificates is to be entertained, it must be done through legislation.

- Ms. Piecuch said that the clerk of that municipality thought any town or city could produce an heirloom birth certificate, but Ms. Piecuch had responded to the clerk that the state law is very clear that only the State Registrar may issue them. Ms. Piecuch is still concerned with control numbers and the loss of control.

- Mr. Scanlan asked if the heirloom birth certificate issued by the State Registrar is a valid legal document; Mr. Wurtz answered in the negative. Mr. Scanlan asked how many heirloom birth certificates are sold; Mr. Wurtz said that very few are sold on their own, but Mr. Wurtz does offer them through a program with the DHHS, where DHHS offers them to those who participate in the Pregnancy Risk Assessment & Monitoring Survey (PRAMS) and DHHS pays DVRA through a grant. Thus without PRAMS, the State sold about 35 heirloom birth certificates last year. Mr. Wurtz is concerned that this would set a precedent because if one municipality wants to produce heirloom birth certificates, all municipalities will want to produce them.

- Ms. Harrigan suggested that perhaps the heirloom birth certificate could be resized so that the next version of NHVRIN could print them on smaller sheets of paper through regular printers, then all municipalities could print them. Ms. Piecuch said that the statute would still have to change. Mr. Wurtz said DVRA needs to protect and defend DVRA's documents as valid.

10.   New business – purchase orders:

- Mr. Cloutier looked at the purchase orders. As of June of last year, the hardware is about $200,000 for the server replacement, and the software and licensing is $37,000. Ms. Piecuch asked if a motion for $250,000 would be more appropriate; Mr. Cloutier responded in the affirmative. Dr. Dupee amended his previous motion so that the Committee was authorized to spend $250,000 on server replacement, and Mr. Burford seconded the amended motion. A vote was taken, and all were in favor; the motion passed.

11. New business – purchase orders:

- Mr. Wurtz suggested two possible dates for the next meeting: Friday April 24 or Friday May 22. Mr. Scanlan suggested Friday April 24.

- Mr. Burford made a motion to adjourn and Ms. Linxweiler seconded the motion. No discussion was made on the motion. The vote was taken, and the majority was in favor with only Mr. Wurtz dissenting; the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 11:20.