



# County of Cheshire

33 West Street, Keene, NH 03431

Website: [www.co.cheshire.nh.us](http://www.co.cheshire.nh.us)

December 22, 2014

Jail Inspection Reports  
**Second Semi-Annual Report**  
**County of Cheshire**  
Director of Administration  
NH Dept. of Justice  
33 Capitol Street  
Concord, NH 03301

**RE: Management report pursuant to RSA 30-B: 12,  
Cheshire County House of Correction**

Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the above statutory requirement, the County Commissioners for Cheshire County are pleased to submit the following report on their examination into the management, condition and security of the inmates in the county correctional facility. Following is our written report to you of the findings and actions or proposed actions on such findings, as recorded within the Public Meeting Minutes of the Board of Commissioners, recorded at the time of the meetings.

At 10:38AM *the second semi-annual inspection of the DOC for 2014* began on November 12, 2014 and this information is contained with the approved minutes of that meeting. This is a record of these inspections/discussions is contained in the Minutes of the County Commissioners meetings which were approved on November 19, 2014.

At 10:38AM the Commissioners adjourned the meeting to conduct the second 2014 semi-annual Department of Corrections inspection as required by RSA 30-B: 12.

Superintendent Van Wickler reviewed provided an overview of the current conditions at the facility and at 10:50AM escorted the Commissioners to an event room for the purpose of conducting interviews with the inmates and staff.

The first inmate interviewed (D. S.) said that this was their first incarceration and it was a relief to be in the Cheshire County facility instead of being sent to the Valley Street facility. They said that they looked forward to attending the AA meetings at the jail and wanted to take part in the meditation classes that are offered. They said that because of the distance that their family must drive to see them they will be using the remote video visitation system for future family visits.

Area Code 603

♦ County Commissioners 352-8215/Fax 355-3026 ♦ Registry of Deeds 352-0403/Fax 352-7678 ♦ Finance Department 355-0154/Fax 355-3000 - 33 West Street, Keene, NH 03431 ♦ County Sheriff 352-4238/Fax 355-3020 ♦ County Attorney 352-0056/Fax 355-3012 - 12 Court Street, Keene, NH 03431 ♦ Alternative Sentencing/Mental Health Court 355-0160/Fax 355-0159 - 265 Washington St. Keene N.H. ♦ Department of Corrections 825 Marlboro Street, Keene, 03431 - 903-1600/Fax 352-4044 ♦ Maplewood Nursing Home & Assisted Living 399-4912/Fax 399-7005 - TTY Access 1-800-735-2964 ♦ Facilities 399-7300/Fax 399-7357 ♦ Human Resources 399-7317/399-7378/Fax 399-4429 - 201 River Rd, Westmoreland, NH 03467

At 11:03AM inmate W. M. was interviewed and discussed their background which included Driving After Habitual, a felony with a weapon, violation of probation, and having served 5.5 years in prison for car theft. The said that despite their history they were looking forward to attending the Instant Recovery Program, attending one-on-one counselling with the case manager, and hoped to be able to have a Licensed Drug and Alcohol Counsellor (LADAC) work with them. They felt that if they could get the help they wanted they could ‘recover my life” and not be incarcerated in the future. They went on to say that more LADAC staff are needed at the jail and the program needs to open to everyone who wants to attend. They said that they are treated respectfully by the Corrections Officers (C. O.’s) and in turn they (the inmates) respect the C. O.’s.

At 11:19 Corrections Officer Harold met with the Commissioners and she provided an overview of her background and shared her history.

She said that she enjoys working with the inmates overall but some of them needed more anger management classes to help them cope appropriately with the stresses of being in jail and also in life outside of the jail. She said that parenting classes are popular among the female inmates but that many of the male inmates don’t attend because it isn’t “manly” to do so.

She said that the inmates have asked for more bible study classes and the dog program that is already in the jail is popular and should be expanded. She also said that only one or two inmates were in the GED program currently.

When asked by the Commissioners what the biggest complaint among the inmates is, she said that it was the fact that they (the inmates) “don’t do anything”.

In response to other questions concerning training and morale, Harold responded that she enjoys working at the facility and she knows that all the C. O.’s “have her back” and that she consider them like family. She said that there is plenty of training but she would be interested in more self-defense training if it were made available.

At 11:33AM the Commissioners entered the D Block and spoke with inmates in day room.

At 11:47AM the Commissioners visited the Medical Department and met with Brenda Wright of the Medical staff. The Commissioners were told that approximately 158 inmates were in the facility that day and about 73 of the inmates were being administered prescription drugs for a variety of ailments.

Wright said that they have three pregnant women inmates and the majority of medical needs over the past six months were due to injuries and cuts.

When asked of the impact of the local Pumpkin Festival on the population Wright said that despite the rioting in downtown Keene the number of bookings was about half of what it was last year.

She responded to a question concerning the age ranges of the inmate and said that the oldest inmate was 75 years old.

At 12:00PM Commissioners Pratt and Zerba left the facility to attend to previously scheduled appointments.

At 12:05PM the Commissioners toured the Booking facility and spoke with Captain Morey. The Commissioners asked a number of questions concerning intake procedures and processing routines.

At 12:17PM the Commissioners entered the Facilities area and discussed the Geo Thermal heating plant and the use of the system to heat and cool the building. The Director of Maintenance answered the Commissioners questions and they discussed the excellent condition of the facility.

At 12:25 the semi-annual inspection concluded.

We trust that this report will comply with the intent of the statute requiring inspection of correctional facilities by the County Commissioners. Please feel free to contact this office or the Superintendent of the County House of Correction, Richard Van Wickler, if you have any questions regarding this report. As we say in each of these reports, we continue to be proud of our facility, its management and the dedicated service of the correctional officers and support staff.

Sincerely yours,

**THE CHESHIRE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Pratt', written in a cursive style.

John Pratt, Chairman