

**City of Keene**  
**New Hampshire**

**CONGREGATE LIVING AND SOCIAL SERVICES LICENSING BOARD**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, February 27, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Council Chamber,  
City Hall**

**Members Present:**

Andrew Oram, Chair  
Alison Welsh  
Jennifer Seher

**Staff Present:**

Jesse Rounds, Community Development  
Director  
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk

**Members Not Present:**

Medard Kopczynski  
Tom Savastano

**1) Call to Order: Roll Call**

Chair Oram called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

**2) Voting for Chair & Vice Chair**

Ms. Welsh nominated Mr. Oram as Chair for 2024. Ms. Seher seconded the nomination, which carried unanimously.

The Board tabled nominating a Vice Chair until the March 26 meeting.

**3) Minutes of Previous Meeting: November 28, 2023**

A motion by Ms. Welsh to adopt the November 28, 2023 meeting minutes was duly seconded by Ms. Seher and the motion carried unanimously.

**4) Unfinished Business:**

**A) Updates:**

**i) *Southwestern Community Services***

Jesse Rounds, Community Development Director, recalled that when Southwestern Community Services' (SCS) application was last before the Board, the Fire Chief reported that their two shelters, one on Roxbury Street and the other on Water St., were over the approved occupancy in the Fire Code. SCS had a variance pending with the State of NH Fire Marshall's office to allow the overage in beds. In the interim, the City provided local approval for the overage until the

variance ruling. Mr. Rounds recommended tabling this application until the NH Fire Marshall's ruling. If the Fire Marshall does not grant the variance, SCS would need to appear before this Board again to take action. Because the SCS application had not yet been opened to the public, this matter could be tabled.

Ms. Seher motioned to table the SCS application until the variance relative to the NH Fire Code is granted or not, with the understanding that SCS will appear before the CLSS Board for a public session in the coming months. Ms. Welsh seconded the motion, which was carried unanimously.

**ii) *Keene Serenity Center***

Mr. Rounds recalled that the Board granted the Keene Serenity Center a conditional license, dependent upon receiving their Conditional Use Permit (CUP) from the Planning Board (PB) and passing the Fire Department (FD) and Housing inspections. Upon inspection to close out the license, the Housing Inspector found unpermitted work and the Fire Department found several issues as well. It is likely that the CUP would need an extension while other permits are pending.

Ms. Welsh recalled her frequent request to receive the FD and Housing inspections before these CLSS meetings, so the Board members have time to review them. Megan Manke, Fire Prevention Lieutenant, noted that this case was unique because the Serenity Center has active permit applications. In the future, Lt. Manke will continue sending Ms. Marcou the inspection reports as they are available. Ms. Marcou recalled that she was working to create an advanced schedule for these inspections—a month and a half before each hearing—so that she can send the inspection reports to the Board in advance of the meetings. The Fire Department must provide 45 days to an applicant to correct any violations; in an ideal scenario, the violations would be corrected before the applications are before this Board.

No action from the Board was needed at this time for the Serenity Center.

**iii) *57 Winchester Street***

A letter was received from the owners of the lodging house at 57 Winchester Street. The letter was sent to all the neighbors informing them of the change in ownership. Lt. Manke said the only thing remaining for this property was to have their fire alarm tested.

Ms. Welsh motioned to remove the conditions of approval for LB 23-19 so it is now fully approved. Ms. Seher seconded the motion, which carried unanimously.

**5) Applications:**

- A) Continued LB 23-07: Applicant, Gregg Burdett, Executive Director for Covenant Living of Keene, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Residential Care Facility, located 95 Wyman Rd., and**

**is in the Rural District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

Chair Oram opened the hearing and requested Staff comments. Mr. Rounds reported that Staff originally requested this application from Covenant Living of Keene in June 2023. The owners repeatedly did not provide the necessary information. The Executive Director, Gregg Burdett, ultimately provided the information required. Covenant Living's license would be due for renewal in March 2024, so it was up to the Board whether to proceed with the renewal at this meeting, or delay until March to issue a new 2024–2025 license Ms. Marcou recalled that in June 2023, Covenant Living submitted a 600-page application packet, which needed to be reorganized and structured to meet the needs of this Board.

Ms. Seher thought it was odd to wait until March if the Board had questions they could pose at this meeting. The rest of the Board agreed, so they proceeded with the 2023 review.

Chair Oram welcomed Andy Mackey, Facilities Director of Covenant Living of Keene. Mr. Mackey said this application was for the assisted living/nursing care section of the property at 100 Wyman Road (95 Wyman Road is apartments that are exempt from CLSS review). Discussion ensued between Mr. Mackey and the Board.

Ms. Seher expressed concerns about the neighborhood relations plan. She did not see how Covenant Living was reaching out to the surrounding community, but only that Covenant is open to the community wanting to connect with them. It was high-level and did not mention any local entities or connections. Mr. Mackey was unclear on what the Board sought given that this location's only two neighbors are 1/8-mile and 1/4-mile away from the facility. Ms. Seher said she was struck by a portion of the application on being a "good corporate citizen" given that there were no mentions of anything specific to this region. She also thought it was not obvious who members of the community should contact with questions or concerns.

Mr. Mackey sought clarity on what the Board was seeking. Covenant Living bought a pre-established facility (formerly Hillside Village). Ms. Seher was looking for the local connection. While Ms. Seher saw some examples in the emergency preparedness plan, she still did not find anything specific to the Monadnock region, including how the State of NH works with the region. She also did not see anything about aging services. Mr. Mackey said that anyone who needs to connect with Covenant Living can come to the front door or call the main desk (phone number on website; corporate contacts are listed in emergency preparedness plan). Ms. Seher was unable to locate a phone number in the application with NH's 603 area code, nor did she find a staff member listed, to whom the public can communicate problems. Mr. Mackey explained that Covenant Living has a very active marketing program, and that Googling Covenant Living would provide a local phone number; Ms. Seher's experience said that was not her experience.

Ms. Seher asked if Covenant Living was reaching out to other local entities on topics like emergency preparedness. Mr. Mackey said yes, Covenant Living has memorandums of understanding with other companies, like Genesis. Ms. Seher asked for the application to list the names and contacts of those within Covenant Living's emergency preparedness network.

Mr. Mackey sought a consistent format or checklist of what to include in the CLSS application package, which he thought was broad. He said it would have been easier if the application specifically questioned who Covenant Living reaches out to in emergencies, for example. Mr. Mackey said they used to have an arrangement with Diluzio Ambulance, which he thought had shifted to Cheshire EMS. Ms. Seher suggested reviewing other entities' applications, like Emerald House, for examples of how to document the local process for emergencies.

Ms. Welsh said she understood Mr. Mackey's frustrations. She noted that this Board tended to get caught-up on the neighborhood relations plan, in particular, to ensure all these agencies are good community members (e.g., with little Police activity and disturbances) and are welcomed in their neighborhoods. She understood that the context was slightly different for Covenant Living because they have few close neighbors. Other good neighborhood relations activities could include open houses, for example, inviting people to tour the facility and making it a more accessible community space. Ms. Welsh agreed that there should be a template to make these applications less confusing. Mr. Mackey explained that he had only worked with Covenant Living for five months and added that there are a lot of hours involved in an application like this.

Chair Oram agreed, recalling that in fall 2023, the Board discussed reviewing how they consider different types of facilities. In listening to the different points-of-view during this meeting, the Chair thought it was clear that the Board has a responsibility to ensure that what it seeks is as clear as possible for the varying applicants. Chair Oram heard a disconnect, much of which was the Board's responsibility, but some was Mr. Mackey's because groups like Genesis provided sufficient applications; however, that information was much more than what the Board really wanted. Chair Oram asked Ms. Seher if her questions had been fully answered. Ms. Seher said she still had another question. It seemed to Chair Oram that a larger discussion was needed, so he recommended continuing this application so Mr. Mackey could work with City Staff to complete the application. Mr. Mackey reiterated that there were a lot of hours involved in this application as well as a \$165 permit fee. Chair Oram clarified that the permit cost is not within this Board's purview.

Mr. Rounds noted that City Staff provide all applicants with examples and an outline of what is required in the application. If there was concern about the time involved, Mr. Rounds encouraged Mr. Mackey to work with Ms. Marcou to complete the application. Mr. Rounds understood the frustrations and concerns that sometimes arise while trying to create and streamline a new process, like this license. Staff would continue trying to make this easier for applicants in the future.

Chair Oram reiterated that there was a miscommunication at hand that needed clearing up. Ms. Seher noted that she was not trying to criticize Mr. Mackey, and for some things she should have contacted City Staff for clarity. Her other question was about Covenant Living's staff training; while there were a lot of details on nursing, there were less about social work and fielding complaints that could arise for a long-term care facility. Mr. Mackey said there is a staff pastor who counsels residents and staff. He added that the bulk of this facility is 81 beds of independent apartment living. There is also an established grievance policy overseen by the State of NH, and the Federal government oversees the skilled nursing. Ms. Seher did not see these details in the application.

Ms. Welsh made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Ms. Seher. On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board continued application LB 23-07 until the March 26, 2024 meeting at 6:00 PM.

- B) CLSS-2024-02: Applicant, Patricia Forman, House Supervisor for Emerald House, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Residential Care Facility, located 32 Emerald St., and is in the Downtown Growth District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

Chair Oram opened the hearing. Mr. Rounds noted that Emerald House's staff could not attend due to illness.

Chair Oram made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Ms. Seher. On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board continued application CLSS-2024-02 until the March 26, 2024 regular meeting at 6:00 PM.

- C) CLSS-2024-03: Applicant, Ryan Gagne, Executive Director for Live Free Recovery, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Residential Drug/Alcohol Treatment Facility, located at 881 Marlboro Rd., and is in the Rural District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

Chair Oram opened the hearing and requested Staff comments. Mr. Rounds reported that this was a license renewal and nothing in the application had changed since the prior approval. Lt. Manke reported that following the December 2023 inspection, only one very minor item was still pending; she was clear that it was up to the Fire Department to complete, and this delay was not because of the applicant.

Chair Oram welcomed Jennifer Houston, Clinical Director of Live Free Recovery, who said that all programming was the same as last year. She had taken the Board's feedback from the last meeting, though there were still some things pending. Chair Oram asked what still remained from that to-do list. Ms. Houston replied that she created a formal document on staff training, she

enhanced engagement with neighbors (minus the jail, which is not interested). Ms. Welsh noticed that some requested details on staff training were not provided in the renewal application. Ms. Houston expressed confusion as she did not know she was supposed to submit these things in advance of this hearing. Ms. Welsh's concern with staff training was due to it being a detox level of care, so she wanted to ensure staff are qualified and receive annual training. Ms. Houston asked what she should submit; she said she was not told to submit anything new since nothing at the facility had changed. Ms. Houston was happy to meet the request once there was clarification.

Ms. Marcou asked whether Ms. Houston could provide the remaining items in advance of the March 26, 2024 meeting. Ms. Houston said yes, but she had not been asked to resubmit for the renewal. Ms. Marcou suggested continuing this hearing until the unfinished business of the March 26 meeting if the Board thought it might have further questions about the submission, or the application could be approved conditionally.

Ms. Houston said she wanted to understand what the Board wanted so she could meet the expectations. Chair Oram suggested that Ms. Houston should work with Ms. Marcou. Based on the level of care and clientele, Ms. Welsh wanted it to be clear that the Live Free Recovery staff are fully trained, including a list of what training the staff had received and their qualifications beyond those. Ms. Houston said that was somewhat subjective and asked for further clarification. Ms. Welsh quoted from the application: *"All licensed staff are required to follow the New Hampshire Board of Licensed Professionals guidelines for obtaining CE and maintaining their license. Staff are required to bring in their updated license when renewal occurs."* She wanted to ensure that all are trained, licensed, and capable of handling this facility. Training should be identified clearly for each person. Ms. Welsh sought the licenses required and what employees need to do to maintain licensure, in addition to the trainings Live Free Recovery provides annually. Ms. Houston was clear that she does not work for the State of NH, and she has no jurisdiction to tell staff the status of their licensures. Ms. Welsh wanted to know what trainings Live Free Recovery provides that all staff are required to attend, in addition to the items the Board requested during approval last year.

Ms. Marcou explained the difference between continuing an application and approving conditionally. If the intent was to review the extra material to be submitted by Ms. Houston, then Ms. Marcou recommended continuing this hearing so it can all be reviewed collectively.

Mr. Rounds asked if there was a requirement for the applicant to describe the trainings they provide. Ms. Welsh thought so, as other applicants had provided those details. Mr. Rounds was still unsure whether submitting that material was required. Ms. Houston did not recall a required list of trainings. Ms. Marcou clarified that the application only lists that a staff training and procedures plan is required, but does not go on to demand a list of trainings. Mr. Rounds said City Staff would help Ms. Houston with that.

Chair Oram thought this was the nature of any new process. Given the Board's obligation to ensure it is clear about its requests, he thought it was fairest—and least burdensome to the applicant—to continue this application.

Ms. Welsh made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Ms. Seher. On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board continued application CLSS-2024-03 until the March 26, 2024 regular meeting at 6:00 PM.

- D) CLSS-2024-04: Applicant, Ryan Gagne, Executive Director for Live Free Recovery, is requesting a Congregate Living & Social Services License for a Residential Drug/Alcohol Treatment Facility, located at 106 Roxbury St., and is in the Downtown Edge District and as defined in Chapter 46, Article X of the Keene City Ordinances.**

If the Board had questions similar to those they presented above for application CLSS-2024-03, Mr. Rounds suggested opening this hearing and continuing it as well. Chair Oram opened the hearing and again welcomed Ms. Houston, Clinical Director of Live Free Recovery. There were no further comments from Lt. Manke.

With this application as well, Ms. Welsh was seeking more details on required staff trainings, and a more elaborate neighborhood relations plan. She understood why the neighborhood relations plan was more challenging for the 881 Marlboro Road location, but thought it was more possible for this location. Ms. Houston said she was doing her best with outreach to the nearby apartments, where the residents are not always consistent.

Ms. Welsh made the following motion, which was duly seconded by Ms. Seher. On a vote of 3–0, the Congregate Living and Social Services Licensing Board continued application CLSS-2024-04 until the March 26, 2024 regular meeting at 6:00 PM.

- 6) New Business:**  
**A) 2024 Meeting Calendar**

A motion by Ms. Seher to accept the 2024 meeting calendar was duly seconded by Ms. Welsh and the motion carried unanimously.

There was no other new business.

- 7) Non-Public Session (if required)**

Chair Oram asked in what situations a non-public session would be required. Mr. Rounds confirmed that there was almost no chance of this Board needing a non-public session.

- 8) Adjournment**

CLSS Meeting Minutes  
February 27, 2024

ADOPTED

There being no further business, Chair Oram adjourned the meeting at 6:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted by,  
Katryna Kibler, Minute Taker  
March 5, 2024

Reviewed and edited by,  
Corinne Marcou, Board Clerk