

**Bonenfant, Janice**

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**From:** colinvo=vanostern.com@mail.salsalabs.net on behalf of Colin Van Ostern  
<colinvo@vanostern.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 24, 2015 7:28 AM  
**To:** \* City Clerk  
**Subject:** Council Report: Budget compromise, heroin, solar & managed care



**Colin Van Ostern**  
Executive Councilor, New Hampshire

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Friends,

I'm still compiling project-by-project notes from this Wednesday's Governor & Council meeting (which will come to you as a regular report in the coming days) but there are four big issues I wanted to make sure you knew about in the interim:

- 1. Budget compromise proposal**
- 2. Heroin & opioid epidemic actions**
- 3. Solar projects status**
- 4. Medicaid Managed Care extension**

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**1. Budget compromise proposal**

Thursday, as a step towards resolving the state budget impasse that began roughly a month ago, Governor Hassan proposed a significant budget compromise that would accept all the outstanding demands outlined by Republican lawmakers on business tax cuts, primarily funded by an increase in cigarette taxes and a \$5 increase in motor vehicle registration fees. [Read more here.](#)

I believe it's far past time for lawmakers to return to the negotiating table in serious manner and pass a sound, balanced budget for our state that keeps our state moving forward. Lawmakers should take their lead from New Hampshire families and businesses, who don't get to take the summer off from their responsibilities. I'm glad to see this compromise proposal from Governor Hassan and I hope legislative leaders will seriously consider it and or return to negotiations with their own similarly serious and budget-balanced proposals.

**2. Heroin & opioid epidemic**

At Wednesday's Governor & Council meeting, NH's new statewide coordinator for substance abuse related issues, Jack Wozmak, presented a list of 22 initial recommendations for policy makers and community leaders to consider as a result of the outreach he has heard

from stakeholders statewide.

Please feel encouraged to call Jack directly at 271-2121 with additional feedback, or to meet, or reply to this email and I'll connect you with him by email directly.

The most immediately impactful action that appears available to policymakers to is make permanent last year's Medicaid expansion in our state, which has already served over 2,000 individuals with substance use issues -- and can ramp-up significantly when local providers are assured this coverage will continue.

### **3. Solar projects**

New Hampshire took two steps forward and one step back in approving community solar projects this summer, with the Council approving municipal projects in Durham (in June) and Milton (this week) by votes of 3-2, but killing a similar project in Manchester by a vote of 2-3.

I was disappointed in the setback in our state's largest city – the project would reduce city power costs from roughly 8 cents to 6 cents per Kwh for all power generated by the array, and save city taxpayers millions over the life of the solar panels. After a recent Union Leader article casting doubt on the future of solar power in NH, I wrote a response here about why I see a bright future for solar energy in NH.

### **4. Medicaid Managed Care**

Tuesday, the state health department proposed a draft agreement to extend and expand the state's Medicaid Managed Care program, which relied on managed care organizations to work towards improved quality and contain costs for Medicaid patients.

Step 1 of Medicaid Managed Care in New Hampshire began in the spring of 2014; this contract would extend this for two years and expand it to include new populations in "Step 2" which often includes more complex care or care with alternative delivery models available.

The Council voted to delay a vote on this proposal, in agreement with Governor Hassan, until members of the public had additional time to consider and offer input on the contracts.

- [A 1 page summary is available here.](#)
- [The full 801-page contract PDF is available here.](#)

A full report on the 130+ other items voted on by the Executive Council, by region, is headed to you in the coming days.

Sincerely,



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