

November 10, 2016

**Minutes of the Washington County  
Public Hearing on the F/Y 2017 Budget  
held November 10, 2016  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.  
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner  
Commissioner Vinton E. Cassidy  
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administration  
Rick Heller, Quoddy Tide  
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, Sheriff's Office  
Mike Hinerman, EMA Director  
Joshua Rolfe, RCC Supervisor  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Dean A. Preston, U.T. Supervisor  
Cat Cannon, MVNO  
Sharon D. Strout, Registrar of Deeds  
Marga James, Machias**

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Commissioner Gardner called the Public Hearing on the F/Y 2017 County Budget to order at 4:35 p.m.

Commissioner Gardner stated Chair Lewis Pinkham had hoped to make it to the Public Hearing but was unable to attend.

The Budget Advisory Committee consists of nine members that are selected by their own Municipal Officers and one legislative member selected by the Legislative Delegation.

The Budget Advisory Committee is provided a proposed budget compiled by the County. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged the difficult work the Budget Advisory Committee has every year to prioritize the need of the taxpayers; balancing the cost with the expectation of a certain level of service provided by the County.

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After five budget meetings, the Budget Advisory Committee returned the budget to the Commissioners' for approval. The overall budget is \$6,744,442.00 with the amount of \$5,744,866.74 to be raised by taxation. That is an overall increase of 5.8106% over last year.

Commissioner Gardner reported the BAC began with a proposed budget with an increase of 15%. Much of that increase was due to the failed jail consolidation plan by the State of Maine. Commissioner Gardner stated the County inherited the total management and financing of the jail back this year, along with a \$279,000.00 shortfall. Commissioner Gardner pointed out the three major contributing factors to the financial challenges for the County; building and grounds structural improvements requiring immediate attention, law enforcement demands and the cost to run the jail. The budget has increased but every dime has a purpose. He noted the BAC cut \$81,000.00 from the County's building reserves that is much needed for infrastructure improvements. County Commissioner Gardner stated the BAC recommended to the Commissioners to look at all capital building needs and explore the option of borrowing funds to address the serious building improvement concerns. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board would pursue this option but the bond would have to be approved by the taxpayers. Commissioner Cassidy agreed the Commissioners will need to look into a capital project to address the infrastructure needs. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald and Treasurer Jill Holmes also agreed with the Commissioners' concerns for the capital improvements needed.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to adopt the F/Y 2017 Budget as presented. (Crowley/Cassidy 3-0)**

The approved F/Y 2017 budget is attached.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**4:53 p.m.**

**ATTEST:**

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Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.**