

January 12, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held January 12, 2023  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:**  
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner  
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator  
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office  
Rachel Worcester, D.A.'s Office  
Lisa Hanscom, EMA Director  
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer  
Tammy C. Gay, Register of Deeds  
Heather Green, Deeds  
Susan Bolles, Probate  
Darlene Perry, Register of Probate  
Lyman Holmes, Probate Judge  
Josh Rolfe, RCC Deputy Director

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Executive Department business was called to order at 5:11 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on December 8, 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

The Commissioners were provided a written report from the Treasurer's Office. The report was accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

By consensus, the Commissioners approved a temporary promotion for Jeremy Towne as Jail Head Cook effective 06/17/22. Jail Administrator made this recommendation based on the fact that Jeremy has been fulfilling the duties of the head cook position since that date. Rich noted the Union is in agreement of this temporary promotion.

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**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the transfer of Susan Bolles from full-time Corrections Officer to full-time Clerk/Secretary of Probate effective 12/30/22. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

It was noted that Susan has worked in the Jail for 7.5 years. This transfer is from the NCEU to the Teamsters Clerical Union. There will be a reset on Susan's seniority within the new union position but she will maintain her longevity with the County.

By consensus, the Commissioners acknowledged the retirement of Carlene Holmes as Register of Probate effective 12/31/22. Carlene has maintained the position of Probate of Register since 1999. The Commissioners extended their debt of gratitude for Carlene's years of service to the County and wish her the best. Commissioner Gardner noted the Board of Commissioners would like to formally recognized Carlene at the next Commissioners meeting that she is able to attend.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to rehire Laurence Hayward as part-time IT Consultant effective 01/03/23. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to accept the resignation of Meghann Hill as full-time Buildings and Grounds Maintenance effective 01/09/23. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Meghann's resignation was accepted without prejudice. Commissioner Gardner inquired how many employees are working in Buildings and Grounds presently. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated Meghann's resignation brought the Buildings and Grounds staff down to two. Betsy noted she is actively seeking to hire a replacement for the vacant position and expects to have a new hire within two weeks. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald noted the Buildings and Grounds were already cut by one staff member by the Commissioners in a previous budget cycle. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners may need to look at adding another Buildings and Grounds staff member back to the roster when the new building is completed.

**AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificates**

None presented.

**AGENDA ITEM: Healthy Acadia Rental Agreement**

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Regina Grabrovac of Healthy Acadia presented the Commissioners with a revised rental agreement for County land on Rte. 192 in Machias. A draft lease agreement was reviewed during the December Commissioners' meeting. It was determined a few revisions were needed to the agreement such as a stated term beginning date and end date. The Board of Commissioners asked that the revised agreement be sent to them in advance of the January meeting. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners appreciated an early look at the agreement to review the changes. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners are satisfied with the revisions, and believe that the Community Corrections Gardening Program is a good community project. Commissioner Gardner asked if inmates can be used to work in the garden. Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe responded that inmates can be used to work if they have been sentenced. Rich noted two of the 52 inmates in the jail have been sentenced; 50 individuals that are incarcerated presently are awaiting trial. Ms. Grabrovac thanked the Commissioners for the vote of confidence for this project.

**AGENDA ITEM: Mileage Adjustment Review**

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented the Commissioners with the Federal standard mileage reimbursement rates for 2023 of .655. It was noted that it was agreed the mileage reimbursement amount should be reviewed in January of each year and adjusted accordingly.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to set the mileage reimbursement rate at .655 effective 01/01/23 as presented.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

An amendment was added to the motion that the County will adopt the Federal reimbursement rate January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year as the county reimbursement rate.

**AGENDA ITEM: Tractor Bids**

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented three bids for a tractor. Betsy noted there has been discussions on and off for years about the need for a tractor. The bids are as follows:

- Guptill's Logging of Machias -
  - o Kioti CK3510HCB Series \$32,000.00
- Guptill's Logging of Machias -
  - o Kioti CX2510HCB Series \$27,500.00
- Greenway Equipment Sales of Ellsworth -
  - o John Deere 3039R Compact Utility Tractor \$49,222.67

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Betsy recommended the Commissioners award the bid to Guptill's for the Kioti CK3510HCB Series for the amount of \$32,000.00. Betsy stated it is not the lowest bid but would be the better machine to fulfil the needs of the county. Betsy noted the purchase would keep business local and service for the tractor would be readily available. Commissioner Gardner asked about the availability of funds. Betsy stated the funds are within the amount that was built into the budget. Commissioner Gardner asked if there would be a place to store the tractor inside. Betsy responded the tractor will be kept in the garage behind the Court building.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to award the tractor bid to Guptill's for the Kioti CK3510HCB Series for the amount of \$32,000.00. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner asked that the hours the tractor is run be tracked. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners would like to see a report of hours the tractor is run after one year.

**AGENDA ITEM: Sheriff's Requests**

Sheriff Curtis presented the Commissioners with two separated requests. The first request was a proposal to pay meal reimbursements in advance when a county employee will be traveling for three or more days. The proposal is to pay per diem prior to the travel with no requirements to return receipts. The employee would be required to request the meal reimbursement at least two weeks ahead to accommodate the current bi-weekly pay schedule. The county would pay the allowable meal cost for each respective meal to the individual. Sheriff Curtis stated this is standard practice for many agencies and would greatly simplify the meal reimbursement process for everyone. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated she does not want to struggle with the Sheriff's Office in regards to meal reimbursement. Jill noted she wants to do what is best for the county, but the auditor has some concerns. Jill read the email from the auditor which noted possible meal expenses increasing if employees are paid per diem vs. being reimbursed the exact amount of the meal expense with a receipt. The auditor pointed out that detailed receipts ensure proper use of meal purchases. Commissioner Gardner stated he appreciated the auditors' words of advice. Commissioner Crowley stated the proposal might be a good idea but with the submittal of receipts. Commissioner Gardner stated the proposal would stream line the process for the Treasurer's

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Office considerably. Jill asked the records reflect that she was not arguing against the proposal but wanted to bring the auditors concerns to the Commissioners.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to amend the County Policy with full consideration of the auditors' notes, and adopt the meal reimbursement policy as discussed and presented.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

The records should reflect this policy will be implemented county wide for employees traveling for three or more days. For those traveling under three days, the policy will remain the same as it is currently. The Board of Commissioners will review the policy in 90 days.

The second request the Sheriff has is for the Sheriff's departments (RCC, Jail and Sheriff's Office) to all have their own individual department credit cards. Sheriff Curtis stated the subject has been discussed several times. Sheriff Curtis explained that having one credit card causes a hindrance in the operation of each respective department. Sheriff Curtis noted he has never been given a valid reason why his request has been denied. Commissioner Gardner asked for an explanation of what type of situation that caused an issue. Sheriff Curtis contents he has three separate departments and each department should have their own. Paula Johnson-Rolfe state their offices use credit cards a lot. Rich Rolfe added that he uses the credit card several times a week for medications for inmates. Commissioner Gardner pointed out that the county can issue all the duplicate cards we want but communication must happen in order to keep a standard control on spending in place. Commissioner Gardner suggested debit cards be issued instead of credit cards for better control of funds. Josh Rolfe stated there should be three individual credit cards with three individual credit limits. Commissioner Gardner asked Treasurer Jill Holmes how many department heads have credit cards. Jill replied the county has four individual credit cards. The four department heads that have a credit card are: Commissioners, Treasurer, County Manager and the Sheriff. Jill noted at one point all department heads had a credit card and it was a nightmare. Commissioner Gardner asked for an amount that each department (RCC, Jail, Sheriff's Office) would be needing for a credit limit on individual cards. Rich Rolfe said he could not give a specific amount. Josh Rolfe stated the amount needed could be anywhere from \$200 to \$1000. Paula Johnson-Rolfe stated the current credit card already has reoccurring charges. Commissioner Gardner stated he is inclined to give this request consideration.

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Commissioner Gardner noted the world has moved to using plastic and many business transactions are processed electronically. Commissioner Gardner stated that approval of issuing three separate credit cards will still warrant some control. This does not mean transactions would require the Treasurer's approval but the Treasurer should be informed of purchases. Commissioner Gardner noted the Treasurer is responsible for cash flow. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners were not willing to make a ruling at this point. Commissioner Gardner stated a thoughtful policy will need to be written that will pass an auditors' approval. In conclusion, Commissioner Gardner stated the request will be revisited once a policy has been written and approved by the Board of Commissioners.

**AGENDA ITEM: Signature on Domain Registration Letter**

A letter to register Washington County for the domain name "washingtoncountymaine.gov" was presented to the Commissioners. The letter is a formality in order to obtain and maintain the .gov domain. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners approved the registration of the .gov domain and Commissioner Gardner signed the letter requesting registration as Chairman of the Washington County Commissioners.

**AGENDA ITEM: Set Overlay and County tax interest rate, Treasurer Jill Holmes**

A recommendation for a percentage for overlay and interest on delinquent taxes was presented. The previous three years overlay percentage has been set at .5%, and the interest rate has been set at 5.00%. Satisfied with continuing with same percentage rates for both the overlay and interest on delinquent taxes,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to set the overlay at .5% for 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to set the interest rate at 5.00% for 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update**

See Port City Architecture presentation and discussion above.

**AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments**

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The Board of Commissioners would like to recognize Carlene Holmes for her years of service as Register of Probate at the next Commissioners' Meeting.

Commissioner Gardner continues to address the police shortage issues with the MCCA.

Commissioner Gardner stated the County participates in a Class Action Law Suit against opioid drug companies. The result of the lawsuit involves disbursement of funds that will be received. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald sits on the Maine Recovery Council. The Council direct the disbursement of funds when the funds become available. Commissioner Gardner asked that the Commissioners are given an update on the status of the opioid funds at the next Commissioners' meeting.

RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe informed the Commissioners of a meeting he attended in Columbia regarding the Maine EMS and ambulance coverage. Josh stated that with the western part of the county being out of EMS service has caused a significant struggle for the RCC. Josh noted the public does not realize how bad the situation is at present. Josh reported there was a large attendance. Josh stated the county really needs to be involved and strongly encouraged to have representation for the County. EMA Director Lisa Hanscom asked to be on a working group. Commissioner Gardner stated he would like to attend some of the working group meetings but he cannot attend all of them. Josh noted he is not necessarily advocating for a county ambulance service but the need for an ambulance service is much needed. Josh stated the working group will be discussing consolidation of the EMS services. Commissioner Gardner stated he would like to be more educated on the subject. Josh stated he will keep the Commissioners fully informed. EMA Director Lisa Hanscom stated EMS has been very busy with a fellowship grant. Commissioner Gardner asked if MEMA has been contacted and what their response is to the lack of EMS coverage. Lisa replied MEMA has not been heavily involved with this issue. Lisa reported the state, however, has set up a Blue Ribbon Commission. This commission has recently obtained \$7 million in funds to help with EMS service coverage with the majority to go to rural areas. The way in which the funds will be distributed is still to be determined. Commissioner Gardner suggested Lisa make contact with MEMA for a formal response from that agency.

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**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Crowley moved to authorize EMA Director Lisa Hanscom to speak with MEMA on behalf of Washington County to acquire MEMA's response to the EMS coverage issue.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 6:22 p.m.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

**\*MOTION\*** The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 6:27 p.m.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

No decision.

ADJOURNMENT

6:27 p.m.

ATTEST:

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Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.