

February 16, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held February 16, 2023
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
E. Harrison, Lubec
Nancy Harrison
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Anna Villone, Deeds
Tammy Gay, Register of Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Joshua Rolfe, RCC Deputy Director
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO, IT
Darlene Perry, Register of Probate
Lyman Holmes, Judge of Probate
Jill Holmes, Treasurer**

Commissioner John Crowley, Sr. was not present.

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:41 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on January 12, 2023. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

The Commissioners were provided a written report from the Treasurer's Office, Emergency Management Agency and Sunrise County Economic Council. The reports were accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom pointed out her written report details contact she has made with MEMA as directed by the Commissioners at the January meeting. Lisa stated she has spoken with Rick Petrie who is leading the discussion in Washington County about the immediate

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problems with EMS. Lisa noted a Blue-Ribbon Commission has been established to study emergency medical services throughout the state of Maine. The recommendation has been to appropriate \$70 million per year for the next five years to support existing issues. Lisa noted the formula for disbursement of these funds will allocate more to the rural areas. \$25 million of the \$70 million will be allocated to specifically target EMS services that are at immediate risk of failing. Lisa stated Rick Petrie would be interested in speaking to the County Commissioners about the role the County may need to play moving forward. Commissioner Gardner stated that he does want to talk with Rick Petrie. Commissioner Gardner noted he is concerned with where this is heading. Commissioner Gardner voiced his concern that this crisis will be put on the taxpayers; by using seed money to establish regional ambulance services, the funding and costs would then revert to taxpayers. Commissioner Gardner questioned if the same scenario will happen with the EMS services that happened with police coverage. Lisa reported that Petit Manan Ambulance Service is closing in March. Lisa stated Cherryfield Ambulance plans to cover the area. RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated that plan will not work. Commissioner Gardner asked what can the Board of Commissioners do. Lisa urged the Commissioners to speak with Rick Petrie. Lisa stated Rick Petrie works under Sam Hurley, Director of State of Maine Emergency Medical Services Agency. Commissioner Gardner stated he would speak with Rick Petrie on behalf of the Board of Commissioners. RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated there have been two meetings to discuss the EMS crisis. Josh noted he plans to attend the meeting being held tonight and suggested the Commissioners attend the meeting as well.

Treasurer Jill Holmes requested that the Commissioners adopt a formal documentation for sick time donation. Jill noted at this time there is a policy regarding sick time donation but there is not a formal process for employees to make sick time donations. By consensus, the Commissioners directed Jill to work with the County Manager to create a document and implement a process. Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated currently the county policy has a one-week donation limit. Rich reported there is a situation arising. Rich asked the Commissioners to consider increasing the donation time one employee can give to another. Rich suggested increasing allowable sick-time donation to two weeks. Commissioner Gardner noted the County needs to be mindful of unfunded liability.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to allow up to four weeks donation of sick time for extraordinary circumstances to be approved by the County Manager. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Commissioner Gardner stated if there is not an extenuating circumstance, the standard one-week sick time donation policy will remain the same.

Treasurer Jill Holmes presented a credit card policy to establish guidelines for the issuing and use of credit cards for online, cost saving and emergent purchases. Jill stated this is a good working document to accommodate the Sheriff's request for more than one credit card for the departments of Sheriff's Office, RCC and Jail. Jill noted she would like the Commissioners to approve this policy on a 90 day-trial period.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to adopt the credit card policy as presented. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to rehire Denise Sullivan as full-time Jail Cook effective 01/22/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe noted Denise Sullivan should be placed on Step 5.

By consensus, the Commissioners approved the reclassification of Philip Taylor from full-time Patrol Deputy to part-time Patrol Deputy effective 01/28/23.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Kori Coro as full-time Corrections Officer effective 01/29/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to discharge Zachary Atkinson as part-time Corrections Officer effective 02/05/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Zachary Atkinson's discharge was accepted without prejudice.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Scott Conlin as full-time Jail Cook effective 02/05/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Anna Villone as full-time Clerk/Secretary of Deeds effective 02/06/23.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

Register of Deeds Tammy Gay noted that Anna comes with customer service experience and will be a good addition to the Deeds Office.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Everett Blair as part-time Corrections Officer effective 02/12/23.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to transfer Hayden Gardner from full-time Corrections Officer to full-time Patrol Deputy effective 02/12/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

Hayden will begin on Step 1 of the Patrol Deputy wage scale with the F.O.P. but will retain his longevity with the County for the purpose of leave earnings.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to transfer Matthew Stanhope from full-time Corrections Officer to full-time Buildings and Grounds Maintenance effective 02/21/23.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

It was noted with this transfer Matthew will no longer be part of the N.C.E.U. He will now be classified as a non-union employee. He retains his longevity with the County for the purpose of leave earnings.

Based on the conversation County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald had with the District Attorney Bob Granger, and per D.A. Grangers' request,

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to transfer Melissa Campbell from full-time Administrative Assistant for the Calais D.A.'s Office to temporary full-time VWA for the Machias D.A.'s Office 02/15/23. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on County Tax Tabulation

Treasurer Jill Holmes presented County Tax Tabulation for 2023 and asked the Commissioners to review and sign the form as presented.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to accept and sign the County Tax Tabulation as presented. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

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As a point of interest, Commissioner Gardner listed the top six municipalities from the highest assessment values to the lowest. Those municipalities and their assessments are as follows:

1. Unorganized Territories \$708,401
2. Baileyville \$575,102
3. Milbridge \$397,671
4. Lubec \$379,937
5. Steuben \$373,503
6. Calais \$327,887

AGENDA ITEM: Award TAN

Treasurer Jill Holmes provided the Commissioners with a summary of the 2023 TAN bids (see attached). Commissioner Gardner read the bids that were received. Commissioner Gardner noted the big increase in the rates received this year compared to last year. It was noted the bid from First National Bank gave two separate rates; one contingent on a deposit relationship with them and one without. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated that her office is currently bidding out banking services. That bidding process has not been concluded yet. Treasurer Jill Holmes recommended the County Commissioners award the TAN bid to Machias Savings Bank with a bid of 4.75 % based on 360-day year for interest in the amount of \$174,208.93.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the TAN bid to Machias Savings Bank as presented. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: County Policy Amendment

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented a County Policy with some amendments. Betsy stated most of the amendments are a matter of house cleaning. Betsy recommended the language that specifies employees with a full-time position of less than 40 hours that are grandfathered could be removed. Commissioner Gardner asked that the records reflect that request.

Betsy noted the health insurance participation policy has been revised to clarify employee eligibility for the weekly stipend in-lieu of health insurance coverage.

Betsy stated the vehicle mileage reimbursement policy has been amended to reflect that the rate will be adjusted by the Treasurer at the beginning of each calendar year.

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Betsy noted the Sale of Disposition of Surplus Property and Equipment policy was amended. Betsy stated the amendment is to change the number of publications the notice is needed to be posted in from three to one publication. Commissioner Gardner stated he would like to leave the number of publications used for notice as three. Commissioner Gardner noted the county utilizes more than one to cover all areas of Washington County.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to adopt the County Policy with the changes as discussed and presented.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner stated the few amendments that have been discussed can be made. The policy does not need to be brought back for the Board of Commissioners for review.

AGENDA ITEM: Signature on Agreement for Special Services

On behalf of Sunrise County Economic Council Executive Director Charles Rudelitch, County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented an Agreement for Special Services. The agreement is for SCEC to carry out Economic Development activities on behalf of the County of Washington. The fixed annual price of \$24,000 remains the same as the previous agreement.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved accept the Agreement for special services between the Washington County Board of Commissioners and SCEC. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

The Agreement was signed as presented.

AGENDA ITEM: Public Safety Communications Equipment Upgrade, Dennis Dorsey

Dennis Dorsey reported that, through a combined effort of EMA and the Sheriff's Office, the County applied for and was awarded a \$3.1 million grant. The purpose of the funding is to upgrade communications from an analog system to a digital system. It was noted that some of the older analog radios no longer work. EMA Director Lisa Hanscom noted the analog system is aging out. Phase 1 of this upgrade will be to convert all Law Enforcement over to the new P25 radios; all fire departments and EMA conversions will follow. Dennis stated the P25 system is the standard going forward. Lisa

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stated the County is following Hancock County and learning from their experiences. Dennis stated he, Lisa and Josh plan work on another application for a grant through the Department of Justice. By consensus, the Commissioners approved the next step of applying to Department of Justice for Phase II funding.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

See Port City Architecture presentation and discussion above.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments

Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners are in opposition of the state taking of electric utilities. The resolution opposing the take-over was read aloud by Commissioner Gardner (see attached).

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to put signatures to the resolution. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

The Resolution Opposing State Taking of Electric Utilities was signed as presented.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 5:36 p.m.**

***MOTION* The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 5:50 p.m. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

No decision.

ADJOURNMENT
5:50 p.m.

ATTEST: _____
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.