

April 10, 2025

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held April 10, 2025  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:**

**Commissioner David C. Burns  
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.  
Commissioner Billy Howard  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds  
Heather Green, Deeds  
Rich Rolfe, Jail  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Jill Holmes, Treasurer  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA  
Joshua Rolfe, RCC/WCSO**

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Executive Department business was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM:   MCCA Presentation – Andre Cushing, President**

Commissioner Burns introduced Maine County Commissioners' Association President Andre Cushing. Mr. Cushing is the newly elected President for the MCCA, and is currently a County Commissioner for Penobscot County. Commissioner Burns stated it is privilege to have Mr. Cushing present. Commissioner Burns noted he has worked with Mr. Cushing when they both served as members of legislation. Mr. Cushing stated as a member of the legislature, he represented District 10. Mr. Cushing requested to present his goals as MCCA President to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Cushing stated his two major goals are to 1) strengthen working relationships with municipal officers and those who assist in county government providing services to communities, and 2) grow awareness and opportunities for Maine County Commissioners to lead on key issues that make an impact on our counties and services such as Registry of Deeds & Probate, Law Enforcement, Corrections, RCC and Emergency Management. Mr. Cushing acknowledged there are challenges. In explanation, Mr. Cushing noted the model for providing service and benefits to rural communities that county government can

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offer does have its' challenges. He stated county government must seek solutions to these challenges facing our cities and towns today. Mr. Cushing stated we need to collaborate and find more effective ways to deliver the mandated and required services that local and county government is providing to our communities and citizens. Mr. Cushing gave several examples of several counties already working on ideas to help their communities collaborate. He stated Cumberland County now provides assessing services and Penobscot County has helped rural communities form the first Fire District in the State. Commissioner Howard asked about Howland Emergency Service staffing. Mr. Cushing noted the challenge to find good qualified people. Commissioner Howard stated it is hard to fill EMT positions in Washington County. Mr. Cushing stated people moving to rural U.T. areas come with big city expectations. He is committed to finding workable situations between municipality and counties. Commissioner Burns noted that he traveled to Augusta recently to testify on the bill addressing law enforcement coverage challenges. The bill introduced is particularly regarding rural patrol. The bill introduced funding for additional state police positions to enhance public safety in Washington County. Mr. Cushing stated both Commissioner Burns and County Manager Renée Gray have been consistent in attending legislative hearings. Mr. Cushing concluded his presentation by stating he looks forward to opportunities that strengthen county organizations.

**Approval of the minutes for the Special Commissioners' meeting held on March 13, 2025. (Crowley / Howard, 3-0)**

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on March 13, 2025. (Crowley / Howard, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Old Business**

➤ None

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the Department Heads. (See attached)

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe reported the primary transport van lost the transmission during a transport. He stated the 2017 Dodge Caravan is in great shape otherwise with only 148,000 miles. Rich reported

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there is \$8377.00 in the current jail vehicle repair budget line.

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Rich received three quotes for the van to be repaired. The are as follows:

- Prescott's Garage - \$4604.53 with a 3-year warranty on parts and labor for remanufactured transmission
- Johnson Town Line - \$5300.00 with a 3-year warranty
- Harold's Transmission in Holden - Approximately \$5000.00 with warranty for 12 month or 12 thousand miles

Rich recommended awarding the repair work to Prescott's and requested approval to proceed.

**\*MOTION\*                    Commissioner Burns moved to award the repair work to Prescott's and approve to proceed with the repairs as recommended. (Burns / Howard, 3-0)**

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom submitted a Funding Overview of Washington County Emergency Management Agency. (See attached) Lisa stated she has met with the Fire Departments. The Fire Chiefs are interest in collaborating with the County as Mr. Cushing explained Penobscot County and the surrounding Fire Departments have done. Commissioner Burns asked how many fire chiefs came to the meeting. Lisa responded eight fire chiefs were present. She noted it was a ZOOM meeting. Lisa stated she anticipates there will be another meeting this month. After reviewing the funding overview, Commissioner Howard asked Lisa if she would consider hiring a grant writer. Lisa responded she has not considered that. She stated it is more likely to get funding when working as a group. Lisa noted EMA has been doing more regionally so all emergency management services have the same type of equipment.

Register of Deeds Tammy Gay gave an update on several bills in the legislature. Tammy stated LD 915, an act to Modernize Deed Duplication from Microfilm to a Digital image, has gone through the public hearing. The work session for this bill is scheduled for April. Tammy stated LD 358, a bill to increase recording and surcharge fees, currently stands as ought to pass as amended. Tammy reported LD 1982, an act to Invest in Maine's Families and Workforce by Amending the Real Estate Transfer Tax, is scheduled for a public hearing for April.

Chief Deputy Crabtree gave a brief summary of the number of services, arrests and summons for the month.

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All other Department Head reports were accepted under the gavel.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe recommended the discharge of Sarah Ferguson as ECS.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Howard moved to discharge Sarah Ferguson as full-time ECS effective 03/21/25 as recommended. (Howard / Burns, 3-0)**

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

None.

**AGENDA ITEM: County Manager's Report**

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. (See attached)

- Renée reported the elevator repair is complete and will be inspected next week. Renée explained the clean-up of the elevator pit had unexpected issues that caused additional expense. This expense will be a shared cost between the State and County.
- Renée gave an update on the new Safety Building. The cleaning has begun. The elevator inspection has been done.
- Renée stated the new fire control panel installation is complete. The system has been tested during the annual fire alarm test and passed inspection.
- Renée reported she attended the quarterly MACCAM meeting in Bangor. She noted the new MCCA President Andre Cushing attended the meeting and presented his goals as president. Renée stated his presentation was inspirational. She stated connecting with other County Managers helps her learn how other Maine counties experience and deal with the same struggles as Washington County.
- Renée stated the first Relocation Committee meeting will be held April 30<sup>th</sup>. She listed the committee members. They are

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Commissioner Burns, Sheriff Curtis, Chief Deputy Crabtree, Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe, RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe, EMA Director Lisa Hanscom, U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston and the County Manager. Renée also noted David Lund should be included as a committee member.

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- Renée stated the 2024 Annual Report has been distributed.
- Renée reported the 2021 audit has been finalized. Treasurer Jill Holmes stated the auditor will begin on the next audit in early May.
- Renée stated the punch list for the new Safety Building is scheduled to be done on Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Renée presented the Commissioners with a quote for paving the parking lot in between the County and Sheriff's Office building. The estimated quote from County Concrete is \$25,000.00. She noted the quote is much less than it could have been due to the fact that the project can be tied in with the paving to be done at the new Safety building. Renée stated she has confirmed with Treasurer Jill Holmes there are ARPA funds left to cover this project. Renée requested the Commissioners approve the paving project.

**\*MOTION\*                      Commissioner Crowley moved to accept the quote of \$25,000.00 and approve the paving project as presented. (Crowley/ Burns, 3-0)**

Commissioner Howard noted even though there is a need, it is hard to justify. Commissioner Burns stated the paving of the parking lot is a safety issue as well creating a nice presentation for the county complex.

- Renée requested the Board of Commissioners to authorize her to sell the seven granite slabs that were salvaged from the foundation of the old D.A.'s office. David Lund of Buildings and Grounds has assured Renée the slabs are worth a fair amount of money.

**\*MOTION\*                      Commissioner Howard moved to authorize County Manager Renée Gray to dispose of the seven granite slabs through a bid process per County Policy.**

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(Howard / Burns, 3-0)

**AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments**

➤ Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) Update

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Commissioner Burns stated LPC meets every Monday by ZOOM. He noted LPC continues to support the interests of municipalities by participating in the legislative process.

➤ MCCA Risk Pool Update

Commissioner Burns stated the bill LD 719 was addressed during the last MCCA Risk Pool meeting. The proposed bill, An Act to Amend the Share of State Funding for the County Jail Operations Fund, requests that the state pick up 35% of the jail operating costs. Commissioner Burns noted the LPC has collaborated their efforts to give this issue the attention it deserves.

Commissioner Burns reported another point of discussion during the MCCA meeting was regarding cyber security. County Manager Renée Gray stated Franklin County was recently impacted by a sophisticated ransomware attack. She stated everyone should be reminded to be aware and diligent, don't click on attachments in emails received from unfamiliar senders, and seek individual training on the subject. Commissioner Burns noted the Risk Pool covered \$50,000.00 of Franklin County's expense; Franklin County had to pay \$80,000.00 for ransom.

County Manager Renée Gray stated, as a reminder, the Risk Pool deductible has been raised.

Commissioner Burns requested the May Commissioners' meeting be rescheduled from May 8<sup>th</sup> to May 22<sup>nd</sup> due to a conflict in the schedule.

**\*MOTION\***                      **Commissioner Howard moved to approve the request to reschedule the May meeting as presented.**  
**(Howard / Crowley, 3-0)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**5:39 p.m.**

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**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.