

August 10, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held August 10, 2023
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Dean A. Preston, Unorganized Territories
Paul Sylvain, Machias Valley News Observer
Reid Albee, County Wide
Josh Rolfe, S.O. / RCC
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Rich Rolfe, WCSO
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Paige Bebus, D.A.'s Office
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office
Megan Huffman, Finance
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:21 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on July 13, 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

Approval of the minutes for the Special Commissioners' meeting held on June 22, 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

Approval of the minutes for the Special Commissioners' meeting held on August 3, 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

There were no written reports provided.

August 10, 2023

81

Treasurer Jill Holmes stated she had two county policies for the Commissioners consideration and review. She noted the meal reimbursement policy was amended at the January 12, 2023 Commissioners' meeting with the intention of a 90-day review. Ms. Holmes stated the amended meal reimbursement to advance funds based on the per diem amount has been working well, and she recommends the policy be kept permanently. Under advisement and with ample review,

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the meal reimbursement advance pay by per diem to be made permanent.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Treasurer Jill Holmes stated the other policy review is on the Sheriff's Office Credit Card Policy. Ms. Holmes stated this policy is still under review.

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-Month Certificates

Six-month certificates were presented for Everett Blair, Susan Bolles, Scott Conlin, Kori Coro, and Anna Villone. All certificates were signed.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignations of Ber-Moses Terry as full-time Corrections Officer effective 07/22/23.

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Marie Chute as full-time Accounts Payable / Payroll Clerk effective 08/04/23. It was noted that Ms. Chute is retiring after having worked in this position for 11 years.

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted a demotion of Bryan Albee as Sergeant in the Corrections Division to Corrections Officer effective 08/13/23. Captain Rolfe noted the demotion was voluntary as C.O. Albee gave up his rank in order to change to the night shift.

Captain Rolfe recommended the promotion of Amanda Nicol to the rank of Sergeant in the Corrections Division. Captain Rolfe noted there were two eligible candidates. C.O. Nicol was the only person that applied. Captain Rolfe stated the NCEU has no objection to waiving the contractual process for hiring the qualified employee. It was noted

August 10, 2023

the NCEU's decision shall not be considered a precedent or practice for future promotional processes. By consensus and with the

82

understanding the position of the NCEU, the Commissioners ratified the promotion of Amanda Nicol to Sergeant in the Corrections Division effective 08/13/23.

AGENDA ITEM: Award Bid for Bulk Salt

Request for Proposals were sent out to six vendors for the 2023/24 season. Two bids were received; one from New England Salt Company of Bangor, Maine in the amount of \$84.00 per ton for all locations, and one from Morton Salt, Inc. of Chicago, Illinois in the amount of \$88.87 for all locations. County Manager Renée Gray recommended awarding the bid to New England Salt Company as low bidder.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the bid for bulk salt to New England Salt Company of Maine as presented.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Award Heating Bid

Request for Proposals were sent out to oil and propane distributors for the winter season 2023/24. The RFP requested both a one and two-year option. Two bids were received; one from Dead River and one R.H. Foster for both the oil and propane. Bids were opened on August 10th and a summary of the bid opening is attached. Dead River submitted bids for both a one and two-year option for propane; \$1.51 per gallon for a one-year contract and \$1.57 per gallon for a two-year contract. R.H. Foster submitted a bid of \$1.649 per gallon. With the recommendation of County Manager Renée Gray,

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the bid for propane for the two-year option to Dead River for a fixed price of \$1.57 per gallon. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Dead River also submitted both a one-year and two-year option bids for oil; \$3.26 per gallon for a one-year contract and \$3.21 per gallon for a two-year contract. R.H. Foster submitted one bid of \$3.479 per gallon. County Manager Renée Gray recommended the oil bid be awarded to Dead River as apparent low bidder.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the bid for oil for a**

August 10, 2023

two-year option to Dead River for a fixed price of \$3.21 per gallon. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

83

AGENDA ITEM: Award Bid for Wide Copier - Deeds

Register of Deeds Tammy Gay stated requests for bids was advertised for a wide format copier, printer and scanner in one. Two bids were received from the following companies: Spiller's Wide Format Solutions and Maine Technical Source. Maine Technical submitted a bid of \$13,093.11. Spiller's submitted a bid in the amount of \$14,936.00 which includes a three-year extended warranty. Ms. Gay stated that, although Maine Technical Source submitted the lower bid price, she recommends awarding the bid to Spiller's. Commissioner Gardner asked for further information on the bid from Maine Technical Source. Ms. Gay responded that the bid was \$2400.00 less but did not include a warranty. Ms. Gay stated Spiller's copier would best fit the needs of the Deeds Office. She also noted Spiller's offered a better service agreement and a payment option of lease to own for 60 months.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to award the bid for the wide format copier, printer and scanner in one to Spiller's as recommended by Register Tammy Gay as presented.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner noted his concern that accepting the 60 months lease to own payment option obligates the County in future year budgets.

AGENDA ITEM: Discussion on Use of Sheriff's Office Parking Lot for Blueberry Festival

Commissioner Gardner stated it was brought to his attention that a vender was refused a space at the Machias Wild Festival last year. Commissioner Gardner explained that the County is not part of the festival committee; however, the County allows the festival committee to use the public space of the Sheriff's Office Parking lot. Commissioner Gardner wanted it to be made clear that his concern is that if the festival uses County public space, there must be a high bar set for censorship for participants of the festival. Commissioner Gardner noted the complaint of the censorship was of a very political nature. Ellen Farnsworth was present to defend the decision of the

August 10, 2023

festival committee in declining the vendor's request for participation. Ms. Farnsworth stated the festival committees' concern was not about politics but profanity. Ms. Farnsworth gave the Board of Commissioners a copy of the Machias Wild Blueberry Festival's policy and sample pictures of the products the vendor in question was wanting to display. Commissioner Gardner stated he just wants it clear

84

that the county is not censoring anyone. He understands there must be a certain level of decorum for this family friendly festival. Ms. Farnsworth acknowledged that she understood, and thanked the Board of Commissioners for the use of the public space. Commissioner Gardner asked the record reflect that the Board of Commissioners have seen the Machias Wild Blueberry Festival policy and recognize that it is fair and reasonable. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners agree to continue the standard and usual course of use of the Sheriff's Office parking lot by the festival.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. The written report is attached. Renée stated the Building Committee met on August 8th. She noted the discussion was productive and healthy. Renée reported Sheridan can do the demolition on 82 Court Street but it would be cheaper and quicker if the demolition was done in-house. Renée noted renovations and preparations of 24 Center Street is a priority. She stated Josh Rolfe is researching a security system. David met with Machias Glassworks to install a sliding window in the foyer and reception area. David is also ordering a metal ladder to install for the 2nd floor exit to conform with code. Renée stated she has met with the D.A.'s staff and they are very happy with the 24 Center Street space.

Susan Sullivan asked about the plan for moving files and noted the confidentiality of all D.A. files. Paige Bebus stated the Board of Overseers was contacted regarding the protocol, precautions and reasonable standard method of transferring files. Paige noted adequate supervision will be needed while D.A. files are being moved. Renée stated Data Tech can advise with the moving of computers and technology but they will not be available to be hands-on. An in-house IT person will be needed to be available for the move.

Paige Bebus stated there are several concerns after the walk-thru and review by the D.A.'s Office staff. The concerns include file

August 10, 2023

retention space, one bathroom available to both staff and public, and whether there is enough space to add offices when a third prosecutor is hired. She stated a review of the file retention caused questions as to whether the attic space can hold the weight. Commissioner Gardner stated a cost estimate is needed for the renovations.

County Manager Renée Gray asked the Commissioners to direct her as to which budget line to use for the renovations. Commissioner Gardner suggested the ARPA funds were to be used. Josh Rolfe questioned about

85

funds being used from the Buildings and Grounds Improvement Line. Commissioner Gardner stated those funds are earmarked for roof renovations. Renée stated she would like to put RFP's out as soon as possible. She noted District Attorney Robert Granger said the staff can move anytime now.

There was further discussion on the D.A. Office move and space for files. Renée stated she just learned of the concerns the D.A.'s Office has regarding file storage. Renée noted the Construction Manager deadline for documents is September 8th. Additional work for file storage is not part of the CM work. Commissioner Cassidy suggested the Building Committee should meet and figure out the details. Commissioner Gardner stated, in his opinion, there is no solid plan here. He stated there is an inference of a plan but there is no known cost, timeline, in-house work needed and where file can be stored. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated this whole process has moved slowly and has been a moving target. He noted Renée's point that direction is needed to get this whole project started. Paige Bebus stated the D.A.'s Office has not begun their move as they were not sure the location of their move had been decided. Commissioner Gardner stated the decision was made at the last meeting. It was discussed that renovations are needed before the D.A.'s Office can move into 24 Center Street. Josh Rolfe state before renovations can be done, the Board of Commissioners must give Renée authority to spend funds. Renée reiterated she needs direction and have a clear decision from the Commissioners on how much she has the authority to spend and what renovations they will approve. Commissioner Cassidy suggested the decision as to what renovations are needed should be left up to the County Manager and the Building Committee.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize the County Manager to start renovations for 24 Center Street in order to move the District Attorney's office with a spending limit of no more than \$10,000.00 to be used. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

August 10, 2023

County Manager Renée Gray stated she will work with the D.A. Office Staff and proceed as soon as possible.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner's Issues

Commissioner Gardner stated the Port of Eastport has been selected to be the destination of wind towers to be transported from Aroostook County. There is a concern about the escort details. Commissioner Gardner noted State Police do not have enough resources for the

86

escort. It is the recommendation that the Sheriff's Offices of the counties the wind towers will be transported through could do the escort instead of the State Police.

Commissioner Gardner stated MCCA has been focusing on the rural patrol issue. He stated the pull back of the State Police on July 9th has affected 7 rural counties. It is the opinion of MCCA to approach this issue by asking that the funds not being spent by the State Police are given to the County to employ deputies for law enforcement coverage. Commissioner Gardner stated, based on the result of the MCCA meeting, he will attend the County Convention, meet with legislature and pitch the idea of funding the counties for the rural coverage. Commissioner Gardner noted this is not a fight with the State Troopers but a fight with the State for rural funding allocations.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Cassidy seconded the motion which passed 3-0. It was 5:50 p.m.**

***MOTION* The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 6:16 p.m. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioners Crowley moved to transition Renee Gray to the County Manager position, and to transition Betsy Fitzgerald from County Manager position to Administrative Advisory hourly position effective 08/13/23. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

The Board of Commissioners recognized that Betsy Fitzgerald has stated her intentions for retirement. The Commissioners thanked Betsy for offering to stay on until the end of the year and thanked her for her

August 10, 2023

years of service to the County.

The Commissioners' meeting in September has been rescheduled to Thursday, September 7th at 4 p.m.

The Board of Commissioners has directed County Manager Renée Gray to create a Washington County Government Facebook page, and asked that two people are assigned to maintaining the page.

ADJOURNMENT

6:17 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

87