

December 1, 2025

Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Special Meeting / Workshop  
Held December 1, 2025  
in the Washington County Commissioners' Office  
Machias, Maine

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Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner David C. Burns  
Commissioner Courtney Hammond  
Commissioner Billy Howard  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Asst.  
Paul Sylvain, MVNO  
Darlene Perry, Probate  
Wayne Jones, Trescott  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Joshua Rolfe, RCC / WCSO  
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office  
Robert Granger, D.A.  
Tammy Gay, Deeds  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Sondra Small, Finance  
Grace Falzarano, Finance  
Philip Pinto, Roque Bluffs  
Robin Pinto, Roque Bluffs  
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA

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Commissioner Burns called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

**AGENDA ITEM:** Executive Session: Personnel Issue pursuant to Title 1  
MRSA § 405 (6) (D)

LUPC Applicant Interviews

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Hammond moved to go into Executive  
Session. Commissioner Howard seconded the motion which  
passed 3-0. It was 9:07 a.m. (Hammond / Howard, 3-0)

**\*MOTION\*** The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed  
the Executive Session. It was 10:03 a.m.  
(Hammond / Howard, 3-0)

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Commissioner Burns stated after two interviews were conducted for the LUPC Commission applicant, he recommends Wayne Jones to be nominated to that seat.

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Howard moved to nominate Wayne Jones for appointment to the Land Use Planning Commission.  
(Howard / Hammond, 3-0)

Commissioner Burns stated a letter of nomination will be sent to Augusta. A confirmation hearing will be scheduled. Mr. Jones will need to attend the hearing. Commissioner Burns stated he will plan to attend the confirmation hearing as well.

**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion to Close District Attorney's Office in Calais**

District Attorney Robert Granger began the discussion by stating his concerns with the possible closure of the Calais District. Commissioner Howard stated the other option instead of closing the office, is to reduce office hours. D.A. Granger stated closing the office would be preferable to cutting the staff. He reasoned that having less staff would cause inconsistent services available at any given time. Commissioner Howard suggested posting office hours so the public is aware of staff availability. Commissioner Burns noted his concern about taking away services for the public. D.A. Granger stated the Calais Victim Witness Advocate (VWA) could do other office functions but doing those other job duties may be outside of her contract. Options for office hours to be reduced or closing office completely were discussed. Finance Manager Sondra Small asked if the recommendations for either option were going to be considered temporary or permanent. Commissioner Howard stated his recommendation is to close the office permanently. Sondra suggested the Board of Commissioners consider a one-year trial. Commissioner Burns asked how this may impact the District Court. Commissioner Howard noted that if the office was left open but not fully staffed, ample notice to the public would suffice and the public would understand. D.A. Granger stated he would want there to be plenty of notices posted in multiple places to decrease the frustration the public may feel with decrease in services. Commissioner Burns acknowledged this was a tough decision. Commissioner Howard stated he would be fine with keeping the Calais Office open with reduced hours. D.A. Granger requested a calendar be posted on the website to give the public a daily notice for the Calais office hours. County Manager Renée Gray stated she could include that information on the county website calendar.

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**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Howard moved to keep the Calais District Attorney's Office open. (Howard / Burns, 3-0)**

It was noted the Calais office would remain at the current staff level. Office hours may vary depending on staff availability. Signs and notification will be made for public awareness. Commissioner Hammond noted there will be an impact to the court cases in Calais. D.A. Granger agreed, and stated cases will need to be moved to Machias causing issues with deadlines. Commissioner Howard stated the situation may need to be reassessed at another time. Commissioner Howard stated there will need to be an explanation posted on the county website, notice should be sent to police departments and law enforcement agencies and a public notice should be sent to all municipalities.

**AGENDA ITEM: Proposal for County Vehicles When Not Responding to County Business (Except for Sheriff's Office)**

Commissioner Burns opened the discussion regarding the use of county vehicles. The proposal for county vehicles not to be used when not responding to county business was presented in a Budget Advisory Committee meeting. Commissioner Burns noted this would not include the Sheriff's Office vehicles as the Sheriff, Chief Deputy and deputies must have a vehicle as they can be called to an emergency situation at any given time. Paula Johnson-Rolfe stated the only other departments that use county vehicles are RCC, EMA and the Jail. Commissioner Burns stated it has been brought to the Commissioners' attention the concern that county vehicles are intermittently being used for personal purposes. Commissioner Burns noted EMA Director Lisa Hanscom has made a good point that the EMA vehicle may be needed in emergency situations as well; therefore, is it important she has access to the vehicle at all times. Commissioner Burns asked if RCC Director Josh Rolfe could offer any justification for use of the RCC vehicle when not responding to county business. Josh responded that his vehicle is also set up and would be needed should an emergency arise. Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated the position of jail administrator has been assigned a county vehicle for the past thirty years. Rich explained that the jail vehicle is also equipped to respond to emergencies. Rich also noted he is fully certified and teaches active shooter response classes and the vehicle he uses is equipped should that type of situation arise. Rich stated the mileage that is put on the jail vehicle is not excessive; staying within 14,000 per year. Commissioner Howard asked if RCC, EMA or Jail used the vehicles for personal use. All three department heads stated they use the vehicles to go back and forth to work, and on occasion, will

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make a stop on the way home for personal reasons. Commissioner Hammond reminded all department heads that we need to be aware that we are under a microscope. Commissioner Burns concluded the discussion by reiterating that county vehicles must not be used for personal use, and thanked department heads for the job they are doing.

**AGENDA ITEM: Proposal to Sell County Land and Current RCC Building**

Commissioner Burns stated there has been a lot of discussion on selling county property; specifically, 73 Broadway in Machias and the 28 Center Street RCC building. Commissioner Burns noted that he would prefer not to sell the Broadway property and have its use as a community garden discontinued, but it may need to be sold. It was noted that if the RCC building was sold, RCC could be moved into the new Sheriff's Office Safety Building. Commissioner Howard stated he had heard that it would cost approximately \$80,000 to move the RCC. RCC Director Josh Rolfe confirmed that it would cost between \$50,000.00 to \$100,000.00 to move the RCC. Josh summarized briefly the details that would need to be figured out for the move. He stated it would need to be a well-planned process as there are a lot of moving parts. EMA Director Lisa Hanscom pointed out that the EMA Office is also in that building and stated there would be a significant cost to move EMA as well. Commissioner Hammond suggested that the county begins to firm up the cost and make a plan for 2027; noting it would take at least nine months to prepare. Commissioner Burns stated an assessment should be made as to what repairs are needed right now for RCC and EMA to remain where they are and what it costs to maintain the building per year. Buildings and Grounds Maintenance worker David Lund gave a brief summary of work that should be done to 28 Center Street if the county was to retain the building. David noted the compressors are working but have problems; an air-conditioning system is needed to keep the servers from over-heating. David stated the pipes in the older section of the building could be drained and shut down for savings, and use that area for cold storage. When asked if there were any alarming maintenance issues, David responded at some point the parking lot should be paved. He noted there is always regular maintenance as well such as painting and deck work. Commissioner Burns stated eventually both departments will be moved from the building. Lisa stated she is prepared to move into the vacated Unorganized Territories office. She is just waiting for the Board of Commissioners to authorize her to move. Commissioner Burns stated she can move anytime now. By consensus, the Commissioners agreed to begin plans for the preparation to move RCC to the Sheriff's Building. As previously discussed,

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**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Howard moved to sell 73 Broadway, Machias County property to be kept in escrow for the cost to move RCC. (Howard / Hammond, 3-0)

**AGENDA ITEM: Preparation for new Fiscal Year**

Commissioner Burns stated one goal of the County is to change the fiscal year so it is more consistent with the towns in Washington County. Commissioner Burns read the Maine State Statute §708 Alternative Fiscal Year. It states "county commissioners of a county may adopt a July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year. A county may raise one or 2 taxes during a single valuation, if the taxes raised are based on appropriations made for one or more county fiscal years none of which exceeds 18 months. A county fiscal year may extend beyond the end of the current tax year. The county commissioners, when changing the county's fiscal year, may for transition purposes, adopt one or more fiscal years not longer than 18 months each." Provisional Treasurer Grace Falzarano stated she has been working with BAC member Crystal Gallina. After working together, Grace and Crystal recommend waiting on the fiscal year change for a few years. This would allow towns to recuperate from the TAN payment "ask". Commissioner Howard stated he was not in favor of waiting. He noted it makes sense to give towns time to adjust, but he stated the county can't wait. BAC member Ben Edwards agreed with the recommendation of Grace and Crystal. Ben stated a two-year minimum ramp up period is a necessity. He noted this past year has been a challenge and there are a lot of logistics and details to be worked out. Ben stated that as appealing as it is to switch to a July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year to remove the need for a TAN for cash flow, it is not feasible to do in the upcoming year. The Commissioners were all in agreement to implement a plan to begin preparing for a fiscal year change in 2028. Grace noted the County should start informing the towns immediately.

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Hammond moved to transition to a July 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year beginning budget year 2028. (Hammond / Howard, 3-0)

County Manager Renée Gray suggested a memo be included in the county tax bills to notify all municipalities of the county's intention to change its fiscal year. Commissioner Burns agreed that it is important to add an explanation in the county tax bills.

**AGENDA ITEM: Preparation for a Treasurer and/or Finance Director**

Commissioner Burns stated there needs to be a discussion about the

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potential management of the Finance Office and how to proceed. In previous discussions, several options were discussed; continue to have an elected Treasurer or, through the ballot process, appoint a Treasurer. It was also recommended that a Finance Director be hired. Commissioner Burns noted the County should seek a legal opinion as to how to begin the process. County Manager Renée Gray pointed out the Professional Fees budget line is already overspent. Commissioner Burns asked if there is a timeline on the appointment of the Provisional Treasurer. Provisional Treasurer Grace Falzarano responded there is not. Commissioner Howard stated he recommends creating the position of appointed County Treasurer with voters' approval and also hiring a Finance Director.

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Howard moved to proceed with the ballot process of appointing the County Treasurer for Washington County as presented. (Howard / Hammond, 3-0)

County Manager Renée Gray stated she will contact the Secretary of State for guidance with the ballot process.

**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion to Live Stream Commissioners' Meetings**

County Manager Renée Gray stated there has been a growing interest from the public to have Commissioners' meetings live streamed so they can be watched rather than having to attend the meetings in person. Renée conferred with EMA Director Lisa Hanscom about the use of the EMA Owl to live stream meetings. Renée reported Lisa is willing to facilitate the use of the Owl for meetings going forward. Renée noted the public would have the opportunity to watch and listen to the meetings but would not be allowed to participate. Any of those in the public that have comments or questions, would be instructed to email for them to be addressed at a later date. The Commissioners agreed by consensus to change the policy on remote attendance as recommended by Renée. Renée stated she will begin posting the ZOOM link for the meetings on the Washington County website calendar. She noted that the meetings will be recorded and saved.

County Manager Renée Gray stated she has updated the schedule of town meetings being held to discuss and vote on the TAN "ask".

**ADJOURNMENT**

11:23 a.m.

**ATTEST:**

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