

December 6, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held December 6, 2023
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
David Davis, Alexander
E. Harrison, Lubec
Reid Albee, County Wide
Nancy Harrison, Lubec
Dennis Perry, Machias
Josh Rolfe, WCSO / RCC
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Michelle Bridges, Whiting
Scott Hanscom, Roque Bluffs
Bryan Albee, Jail
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office
Dean Preston, Unorganized Territories
Heather Green, Deeds
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Darlene M. Perry, Probate
Megan Huffman, Finance
Jill C. Holmes, Finance**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:52 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on November 9, 2023. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0-1)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

Commissioner Gardner stated that after much discussion the final budget has been set. He noted the first proposed budget initially had a 20% increase from the previous year. Commissioner Gardner stated

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the increase was driven by the need to fund public safety. He noted departments had very good arguments for the explanation of their additional needs. Commissioner Gardner noted some of the requests did not pass. He stated the Commissioners will continue to attack the issues of public safety needs in hopes of finding a way to fund those needs. Commissioner Gardner asked Budget Advisory Committee Chair, Lewis Pinkham, to present the final budget. Mr. Pinkham state the total Washington County budget for FY 2024 is \$8,098,261.83. He noted there is an increase of 11.49% from last years' budget of \$7,263,479.42. Commissioner Gardner pointed out this increase was cut almost in half from the initial request. Commissioner Gardner thanked Mr. Pinkham and the BAC members, noting the tough decisions that were made. Mr. Pinkham thanked all the Department Heads, the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners for working with and supporting the BAC. Commissioner Cassidy stated he appreciates the efforts of all involved and Commissioner Crowley concurred. Commissioner Gardner concluded by stating the Board of Commissioners will continue to be a voice for the people in Augusta and find funding solutions.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to adopt the 2024 County budget in the amount of \$8,098,261.83 with an increase of 11.49% pending the overlay amount to be set in January.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Treasurer Jill Holmes stated she will be prepared to offer overlay in at the January Commissioners' meeting. She noted the overlay has been set at .5% for a considerable number of years. Jill stated State valuations should be received soon.

Five copies of the budget were signed.

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' accepted the resignation of Philip Taylor as part-time Patrol Deputy effective 11/09/23 without prejudice.

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Denise Sullivan resigned from her full-time position as Jail Cook effective 11/27/23. By consensus, her resignation was accepted.

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Teresa Prescott resigned from her position as part-time Jail Cook effective 12/01/23. Her resignation was also accepted by consensus.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to re-classify Brody Border from part-time to full-time Corrections Officer effective 12/31/23. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

By consensus, the Commissioners recognized the promotion of Michael Perkins to the rank of Corporal in the Corrections Division effective 12/03/23.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Katelyn Brooks as part-time Corrections Officer effective 12/17/23. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-Month Certificates

Six-month certificates for Matthew Stanhope and Anna Strout were signed as presented.

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Commissioners' Meeting Dates for 2024

The schedule for 2024 Commissioners' meeting dates was presented.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the Commissioners' meeting dates for 2024 as presented. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Holiday Schedule for 2024

The schedule for the 2024 Holiday schedule was presented.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the Holiday Schedule for 2024 as presented. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: 2024 Committee and Board Appointments

The 2023 list of Committee and Board Appointments was presented. It was suggested that all committee and board appointments remain the same for 2024.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to keep all 2024 committee and board appointments the same as 2023. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

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See attached list.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. She stated the District Attorney offices will be moved to the 24 Center Street location on December 14th. Commissioner Gardner inquired about the demolition of the 82 Court Street building. Renée responded that she will be preparing and publicizing an RFP in January for the demolition. Commissioner Gardner suggested that salvage options should be explored. Commissioner Cassidy thanked the Building Committee for a job well done.

AGENDA ITEM: Motorola Agreement

Emergency Management Agency Director Lisa Hanscom presented the Motorola Acceptance Certificate for their approval and customer signature. Lisa reported funding of over \$3.1 million has been granted by the Department of Justice. Funds will be used for repeaters and radios. Lisa asked that the agreement be signed as there will be a price increase December 15th. RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated an agreement with Motorola has already been approved by the Commissioners. Lisa stated she was unsure of how the funds will be received; if the funds will be received in advance or reimbursed. Commissioner Gardner stated it is important to know how this funding will work. He stated he would be comfortable directing the County Manager to execute the Motorola System Acceptance Certificate.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize County Manager Renée Gray to execute the agreement with the caveat that the County Manager and the Treasurer is comfortable with financing the expenses. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner requested a financial report of the DOJ grant. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners have not seen a budget for this project. Josh noted there is a detailed break-down of costs. Commissioner Gardner stated the he wanted to see the break-down.

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MOTION Commissioner Crowley moved to add the amendment to the previous motion that the project is not to exceed the \$3.1 million funding grant. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

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AGENDA ITEM: Commissioners' Issues / Public Comment

The discussion of the purchase of new EMA vehicle was continued. At last month's meeting EMA Director Lisa Hanscom presented bid amounts for a 2023 F150 4 X 4. The recommendation was to accept the bid from Varney's for \$40,259.00. The bid was based on a trade-in value of \$12,000.00 for EMA's 2015 Ford Expedition. The Commissioners suggested considering the options of retaining the 2015 Ford Expedition to be used by another department as it has fairly low mileage. The Commissioners' directed Lisa to contact Darlings and notify them of a conditional acceptance of their bid.

County Manager Renée Gray stated she spoke with Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe. He is interested in acquiring the 2015 Expedition to use as a transport vehicle. Rich stated funds could be transferred from the Jail budget to the EMA. David Davis, BAC member, questioned why the 2015 Expedition was being traded in with low mileage anyway. Commissioner Gardner stated he questions it as well. Lisa stated it is difficult to get parts for this vehicle. Treasurer Jill Holmes asked if the Jail will need to pay the trade-in amount of \$12,000.00. Commissioner Gardner stated the transfer amount to EMA should be just what is needed to make the deal to purchase the new vehicle. Commissioner Gardner noted it makes sense to retain the 2015 for county use. It was noted the 2015 should have an overall check for issues; barring no issues, it should be retained. Commissioner Gardner also stated a condition of final acceptance of the bid for the new vehicle will depend on the delivery date. If the delivery date can be within a reasonable timeframe, the purchase can proceed.

MOTION Commissioner Gardner moved to authorize EMA director Lisa Hanscom to purchase the 2023 F150 from Varney's for the sum total of \$52,135.00 with the stipulations that (1) the delivery date can be within a 60-day timeframe, and (2) the 2015 is deemed suitable to pass a vehicle inspection and the Jail can transfer the necessary funds to complete the sale for the new EMA 2023 vehicle. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

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Commissioner Gardner stated he is gathering support for a Naval Ship to be commissioned in Eastport and to be named the USS Margareta. He stated he shared the history of the first naval battle of the American Revolution that happened here in Washington County in 1775 with the Commissioning Team while they were in Eastport commissioning the U.S. Naval ship the USS Augusta. The Commissioning Team was unaware of the

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history. Commissioner Gardner is pursuing the commissioning in 2025 to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the capture of the H.S. Margareta. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners support approaching the delegation and gathering support in this endeavor.

ADJOURNMENT

5:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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