

December 8, 2022

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held December 8, 2022
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Lewis Pinkham, Milbridge
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer
Carlene M. Holmes, Probate
Dean A. Preston, U.T Supervisor
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Elizabeth Powers, Jonesboro
Susan Hatton, SCEC
Katie Freedman, Healthy Acadia
Regina Grabrovac, Healthy Acadia
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Joshua Rolfe, RCC
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Stephen Rutto, Jonesboro**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:45 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on October 13, 2022. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

Commissioner Gardner asked that the record reflect the November meeting was canceled due to scheduling conflicts.

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on 2023 County Budget

Budget Committee Chair Lewis Pinkham stated there was a lot of information to work through on this years' budget. Lewis commented that he appreciated all the information provided. Lewis noted it was a trying budget year; starting with a budget with a 20% increase. Lewis stated the budget is being returned to the Commissioners with an overall county budget increase of 10.2435%.

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Lewis acknowledged this is a significant increase but hopes that every community can support it. Lewis concluded all who worked on the budget should be commended. The final budget is a total of \$7,263,479.42. It was noted that this amount does not include the overlay that will be set in January. Commissioner Gardner stated it was not said what is being done with the extra funds. Commissioner Gardner noted many decisions are made for the county. Commissioner Gardner asked that the record reflect that much of the budget discussions were focused on law enforcement needs. Commissioner Gardner pointed out the county has had to step up as State Police and municipalities are reducing their forces. Commissioner Gardner noted the full effect of the State Police pullout will not be known until June. Commissioner Gardner stated law enforcement coverage will be revisited mid-year.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the 2023 County budget for \$7,263,479.42 with an increase of 10.2435% pending the overlay amount to be set in January.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Commissioner Cassidy stated the drug problems in Washington County have had a trickle-down effect showing in an increase of violence and crime. Commissioner Cassidy acknowledged the Budget Advisory Committee has done a lot of work on the 2023 budget and hopes the Sheriff's Department realizes that the Board of Commissioners have done the best they can.

Commissioner Crowley thanked Lewis Pinkham for his leadership and thanked the budget committee for all their work.

Five copies of the budget were signed.

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

Written reports were submitted by the Treasurer's Office, Emergency Management Agency and Sunrise County Economic Council. All reports were accepted under the gavel. See attached.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Victoria Dore as full-time Corrections Officer effective 10/09/22.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

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The discharge of Donna Pottle as full-time Jail Cook effective 11/18/22 was accepted by consensus. Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated the discharge was within the probationary period.

By consensus, the resignation of Marlene Sprague as Deputy Register of Deeds was accepted effective 12/02/22.

Registrar of Deeds Tammy Gay recommended the promotion of Heather Green to the position of Deputy Register of Deeds. Tammy stated Heather has worked in the Deeds Office for the past year as Secretary/Clerk. Tammy noted Heather has proven herself and is the best fit for the position. By consensus, the Commissioners approved the promotion of Heather Green to Deputy Register of Deeds effective 12/05/22.

As the result of a hiring process,

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Jason Cilley as full-time Corrections Officer effective 12/18/22.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on six-month Certificates

Six-month certificates for Jordan Dudley and Brian Knox were signed as presented.

AGENDA ITEM: Rental Agreement on Rt. 192 County Land

Regina Grabrovac offered a Lease Agreement draft for the Commissioners approval. The Lease Agreement, between Healthy Acadia and Washington County, is for Healthy Acadia to lease County property located on Broadway (also known as Rt. 192) for a period of 20 years. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated that it was her understanding the lease is for a 10-year period. Regina stated the organization is in hopes of a 20-year lease, with a 10-year review. The Board of Commissioners reviewed the draft presented. Commissioner Gardner asked if it was the intent to review the agreement or acquire signatures on the agreement. Regina stated she would like to review and discuss the details with the Commissioners. Commissioner Gardner questioned the statement in the agreement regarding taxes. Number five states "Landlord shall pay all taxes or assessments which are levied or charged on the site during the term." Commissioner Gardner noted the County is tax free. Commissioner Gardner stated that if something happens that causes a tax bill to be assessed, Healthy Acadia will be responsible for the additional assessment. Regina

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noted that the organization is offering to pay a nominal price of \$30.00 per year for property rental. Commissioner Gardner stated that should tax codes change, 10 years is a long time, let alone 20 years. Commissioner Gardner insisted the County cannot be on the hook for any additional charges including property taxes. Commissioner Gardner pointed out the Leasehold Mortgage language on page 2, number 11. Commissioner Gardner stated the County is subrogating its position as a bank. The County cannot do that. Regina agreed to remove that clause. Commissioner Gardner asked where the term was stated in the agreement. Regina pointed out the agreement includes 5-year and 10-year benchmarks which are referred to in Schedule 2. Commissioner Gardner stated Schedule 2 does not reference a term; the agreement references a term of 20 years with a lease start date of January 1, 2023 and ending on December 31, 2042. Commissioner Gardner noted that from his standpoint, at the end of five years, the Commissioners have a right to terminate the lease if the "intent of use" has not been met or explanation for not meeting the goal is satisfactory. Commissioner Crowley agreed five years is a good term to see how things are going. Commissioner Gardner concluded that he would like to look the lease agreement over more carefully, but doing so with a forward lean. Commissioner Gardner directed County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald to work with Healthy Acadia and report back to the Board of Commissioners prior to the January meeting in order for them to come to the meeting with answers.

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Commissioners' Meeting Dates for 2023

The Commissioners' meeting schedule dates for 2023 were presented for approval. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald noted the meetings are all scheduled for the 2nd Thursday of each month as they have been in the past. One meeting date was recommended to be changed from February 9th to February 16th. This change would allow the Treasurer to have TAN information prepared and ready for the Commissioners' approval.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve the Commissioners' Meeting dates for 2023 as presented.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Holiday schedule for 2023

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented the holiday schedule for 2023. Betsy noted Juneteenth is included on the schedule. Commissioner Gardner asked if the County has always recognized the Thanksgiving Friday as a holiday. Betsy responded that Thanksgiving Friday has always been on the holiday schedule.

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***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the 2023 Holiday schedule as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Award Snowplowing and Salt/Sand Services

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated the County received only one bid for snowplowing and salt/sand services. The bid is from "BY US" Company for services beginning in the fall of 2022 through the end of winter 2023. The bid amount is \$11,000.00 plus additional rates for snow relocation. Betsy recommended the Commissioners accept this bid.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to award the Snowplowing and Salt/Sand Services bid to "BY US" Company as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Award Patrol Vehicle Bids

Sheriff Curtis presented a summary of the bids received for three new vehicles for his department. Bids were received from Darling's Ford for \$120,355.00 and Quirk Auto Group for \$138,253.76. Sheriff Curtis recommended the Commissioners accept the lowest bid from Darling's Ford. Commissioner Gardner asked what type of vehicles are being purchased. Sheriff Curtis responded a Ford Interceptor, a Ford Expedition and a Ford F-150 Supercrew. Commissioner Gardner inquired as to why the Sheriff's office is using Supercrews. Sheriff Curtis stated his department got rid of three Supercrews today; they were not worth much but they were able to repurpose the electronics from them.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to award the Patrol Vehicle bid of \$120,355.00 for three vehicles to Darling's Ford as low bidder. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: 2023 Committee and Board Appointments

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald presented a list of Committee and Board Appointments in 2022. Commissioner Crowley recommended all appointments remain the same for 2023.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to keep all Committee and Board appointments the same as 2022. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

The 2023 Committee and Board appointments are as follows:

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- Maine County Commissioners Association and Risk Pool Board -
Commissioner Gardner (Primary)
Commissioner Cassidy (Secondary)
- Sunrise County Economic Council Board Member -
Betsy Fitzgerald
- Northeast County Workforce Investment Board -
Commissioner Gardner
- Washington County Council of Governments Board of Directors -
Betsy Fitzgerald
- WCCOG Brownfield Advisory Committee -
Betsy Fitzgerald

Betsy Fitzgerald is to be proxy if there is no Commissioner available.

AGENDA ITEM: Approval of IT Services Contract Renewal

An IT Services Contract renewal was presented to the Commissioners for their approval. Treasurer Jill Holmes noted the contract renewal amount is \$20 more than the budgeted amount. Commissioner Crowley questioned if the services should be put out to bid as the cost is over \$2500.00. The policy, following state statutes, is that all purchases of services or product over the amount of \$2500.00 must be put out to bid. Josh Rolfe stated the services are so specific that a new provider would not have the ability to perform the services without the help of the previous provider. Commissioner Gardner stated Commissioner Crowley's statement is well-founded. Commissioner Gardner noted with specialized services, he supports the rationale the previous contracted provider is the sole source. Commissioner Gardner stated he has no concerns in approving the contract for IT Services with Dennis Dorsey as presented.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve the IT Service Contract Renewal with Dennis Dorsey as the sole source as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner stated the County should look at the policy and make changes to provide for the uniqueness that requires the County to look at specialized services differently for the purpose of the bidding process. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald stated she will review the county policies and procedures for the bidding process and amend as needed.

Treasurer Jill Holmes asked to address the issue of IT services for the county administrative offices. Jill noted it has been brought to

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her attention that Lisa Hanscom, Betsy Fitzgerald, Dean Preston and Dennis Dorsey was able to secure a \$30,000.00 grant for new servers that are needed in the Courthouse building. Jill stated the grant does not include the amount needed to install and maintain the servers. Dennis Dorsey stated a second part-time IT person would help with the up-keep on the county side. It was noted there are 10 plus existing servers for the Sheriff's Office that have to be maintained. Commissioner Gardner asked when the new servers would be installed and running. Dennis Dorsey responded the servers will be fully operational by the first of February. Dennis stated it will cost \$6,000.00 to complete the installation; time needed for maintenance of systems will be reviewed at mid-year to see if the Sheriff's needs are lessening.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to approve EMA Director Lisa Hanscom to engage Dennis Dorsey Consulting for the purpose of server work. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

An amendment to the motion was made that County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald may sign the contract.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

Commissioner Gardner asked the Sheriff for his input on the latest plans for the new safety building. Sheriff Curtis responded that he was not in favor of the location. Sheriff Curtis stated that if that was what the County could afford, then he will have to go along with it. Commissioner Gardner stated the configuration of the newest floor plan is much better than the previous floor plan. Commissioner Gardner noted that next few weeks will be used to gather comments and share with the architect. Commissioner Gardner concluded the new plan was, at least, a good starting point.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner's Issues

Commissioner Gardner reported there is a referendum for the State of Maine to buy out Central Maine Power and Versant Power. Commissioner Gardner requested it to be reflected in the record the Board of Commissioners do not support this referendum. Commissioner Gardner stated this would be bad policy. Commissioner Gardner also stated he wanted it on record that he favors Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative taking over the Washington County service area. There was further discussion regarding power generation. It was noted that EMEC charges .14/KWH and Versant charges .30/KWH. Commissioner Cassidy echoed Commissioner Gardner's sentiments on having all of Washington County

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be under Eastern Maine Electric service.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to make record the position of Washington County Board of Commissioners are in opposition of the referendum for a state take-over of the power supply with Commissioner Gardner providing comments as necessary. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Public comments were heard from Elizabeth Powers of Jonesboro. Ms. Powers informed the Commissioners that there is a workshop scheduled on December 13th in Columbia Falls. The informational workshop is on moratoriums; why they are needed and what is the process.

Ms. Powers asked for the functionality and the status in terms of reactivating the Washington County Council of Government. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald reported there is an effort to revise the COG at this time. Betsy stated there has been a survey sent to all the towns of Washington County asking for the towns' interest in participation. Betsy reported that of the 47 towns in Washington County 10 have responded to date.

Sheriff Curtis gave Commissioner Gardner a letter he has received from the Lieutenant of the State Police. Sheriff Curtis stated the letter reported what areas the State Police plan to cover and what areas they will not be covering. Commissioner Gardner asked what actions the Maine Sheriff's Association are taking. Sheriff Curtis stated there are meetings coming up and anticipates there will be more information as to how this is all going to work. Commissioner Gardner stated he will speak directly to this issue at the next MCCA meeting and the Sheriff will do the same at the Maine Sheriff's Association. Commissioner Gardner questioned if Maine Municipal Association has been involved yet. Commissioner Gardner stated this situation has potential to become an additional tax burden. Commissioner Gardner recommended garnering support from the towns and MMA to challenge this change in state police policy.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to forward State Police coverage concerns to both Maine County Commissioners Association and Maine Sheriffs' Association. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

ADJOURNMENT

5:40 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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