

February 15, 2024

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held January 15, 2024
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

Attending the meeting were:

**Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Kevin Brodie, Machias CEO / Whiting
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Megan Huffman, Finance
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Aiden Francis, Washington County Jail
Dean Preston, Unorganized Territories
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, Emergency Management Agency
Heather Green, Deeds
Josh Rolfe, RCC/WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Darlene Perry, Probate
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:09 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on January 11, 2024. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0-1)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the Emergency Management Agency and the Treasurer's Office. The reports were accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificate

A six-month certificate for Megan Huffman was signed as presented.

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AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on County Tax Commitment

Treasurer Jill Holmes provided the County Tax List for 2024. Commissioner Gardner noted the assessed valuation of the municipalities is received by the State of Maine. The 2024 Mill Rate is 0.00160896476. Commissioner Gardner listed the five municipalities with the highest assessed values and tax amounts; Unorganized Territories, Baileyville, Lubec, Milbridge and Steuben.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to sign the County Tax Commitment as presented. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Award TAN

Treasurer Jill Holmes presented a bid opening summary for the 2024 Tax Anticipation Note. (See attached) Jill reported the request for a TAN in the amount of \$4,958,491.00 was published. Bids were received from:

- Androscoggin Bank
- Camden National Bank
- Machias Savings Bank
- The First National Bank

Treasurer Jill Holmes recommended to the County Commissioners that the TAN bid be awarded to Machias Savings Bank as low bidder with a 5.25% rate based on a 360-day year for interest in the amount of \$224,888.23.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to award the TAN bid to Machias Savings Bank as recommended by the Treasurer. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Treasurer Jill Holmes stated the bond council paperwork did not arrive on time, therefore, there is a resolution for the TAN to be executed differently than normal. Commissioner Gardner read Section 2 of the *Resolution of the Commissioners of Washington County, Maine Authorizing the Issuance of a 2024 Tax Anticipation Note in the Amount of \$4,958,491.00*. It states: "The form of the Note is hereby approved. The County Treasurer is authorized and directed to sign the Note and a Certificate (the "Certificate") on behalf of the County. The official seal of the County is authorized and directed to be impressed on the Note and the Certificate. The Note shall be

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countersigned by the County Manager. The County Treasurer is authorized and directed to deliver the Note and the Certificate to the Bank upon receipt of the purchase price therefore."

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***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize the TAN to be executed as outlined in Section 2 of the Resolution. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Signature on Agreement for Special Services – Sheriff's Department

Chief Deputy Crabtree presented an Agreement for Special Services for the Town of Jonesport. He stated the services is for selective enforcement efforts above and beyond the normal services provided by the Sheriff's Office. The agreement is for the calendar year 2024 and is not to exceed \$27,500.00.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to sign the M.O.U with the Town of Jonesport as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Appointment to Downeast Community Partners Board

Downeast Community Partners is a community action program for low-income families. There are 18 members on the Board of Directors for DCP; nine members from each county of Washington and Hancock.

Required by legislature, members of the board include:

- members appointed by government officials;
- members from the private sector; and
- members that represent low-income citizens.

County Manager Renée Gray explained the election process. DCP has a vetting process and letters of nominations are then sent to the Commissioners for consideration. Nicole Brandt and Marcias Rogers have been nominated for the DCP Board of Directors.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to appoint Nicole Brandt and Marcia Rogers to the DCP Board of Directors as so recommended. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on MRS Tax Portal Project

Register of Deeds Tammy Gay stated Maine Revenue Service is planning on moving the collection of the Maine Real Estate Transfer Tax from County Deeds to a MRS Tax Portal. Tammy explained that Deeds has acted as the transfer tax agent. In 2021 Register of Deeds created a

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Tax Portal Implementation Team to assist Maine Revenue Services in moving the tax collection to the MRS Tax Portal. The project is scheduled to begin in October of 2024. Tammy reports there has been

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no training and no updates to the Registry of Deeds. Tammy is requesting the Commissioners sign the letter to be sent to the Maine Revenue Services asking that the Registers concerns be addressed. The questions and concerns include 1) the need to have software prior to deploying the portal, 2) proper guidance to answering questions from the public that may arise, 3) adequate training for Deeds staff, 4) support in the transition, and 4) timely information and communication with the Register.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to sign the letter in support of the Register of Deeds for the Maine Revenue Services Tax Portal Implementation. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Award Bid for 82 Court Street Demolition

County Manager Renée Gray stated a request for bids was advertised for proposals for the demolition of the 82 Court Street Building. Renée presented a summary of the bids that were opened on Thursday, February 8th. Seven bids were received. (See attached) The County Manager's recommendation is to award the bid to J&J Construction of Jonesboro as low bidder.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the bid to J&J Construction as recommended by County Manager Renée Gray. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Renée stated Mr. Cox of J&J Construction was present to answer any questions. Commissioner Gardner asked how the foundation site will be back-filled. County Manager Renée Gray stated it will be back-filled with materials on site. Commissioner Gardner inquired about the granite on site. Renée stated the granite will be retained to be used at the new construction site. Commissioner Gardner noted the new building will be a large structure on a small site. He asked if there is a need for a pre-inspection. Wesley Jordan of Sheridan confirmed there is usually a pre-inspection done. Jeffrey Davidson owns the building on Court Street next to the County parking lot. He voiced his concern that construction nearby may cause damage to his foundation. Jeffrey stated that when the parking lot was constructed his basement cracked. He noted that he paid for the repair himself,

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but if damage is done again, he will be expecting the County to cover the costs. Commissioner Gardner stated his concern is understandable. Commissioner Gardner asked that the Construction Manager, Sheridan, work with the County Manager to be sure there are no issues with adjacent land owners. County Manager Renée Gray concluded the

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discussion with noting the demolition is scheduled to be complete no later than April 30th.

AGENDA ITEM: Formalize Bid Award for Roof and Gutter Repair

During the January Commissioners' meeting, the Commissioners awarded a bid for roof and gutter repair to Armor Roofing. The original bid was for \$25,000.00 to repair the county building slate roof and \$8,600.00 to repair the trim and membrane of the jail roof. Further discussion was had concerning the need to also repair the Sheriff's roof portion of the building. The Commissioners tasked County Manager Renée Gray to contact Armor Roofing for an estimate to include repairs to the Sheriff roof portion. Renée reported that Armor Roof responded that they are interested in including the Sheriff roof portion, amending the bid from \$25,000.00 to \$40,000.00. The jail roof repair bid of \$8600.00 will remain the same.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the amended bid of \$48,600.00 for the roof repair of two main buildings and the jail roof. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Allen Corey as full-time ECS effective 01/14/24. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

By consensus, the Commissioners ratified the promotion of Scott Conlin as Head Cook effective 01/21/24.

By consensus, the Commissioners ratified the demotion of Jeremy Towne as Head Cook effective 01/21/24.

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Thomas Johnson as part-time Corrections Officer effective 01/26/24.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Chad Preston as full-time Corrections Officer effective 01/28/24.**

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(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

MOTION Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Aiden Francis as part-time Corrections Officer effective 01/28/24.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

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By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Kori Coro as full-time Corrections Officer effective 02/04/24.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire James Frauenhoffer as full-time Corrections Officer effective 02/04/24.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Whitney Hatt as full-time Jail Cook effective 02/04/24. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

With the recommendation of Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe and by consensus, the Commissioners discharged Kayla Townsend as part-time Corrections Officer effective 02/15/24.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

County Manager Renée Gray stated Machias CEO Kevin Brodie was present to speak on the current concerns raised by the Fire Marshal in regards to the new District Attorney's Office on 24 Center Street. Kevin submitted a letter with his recommendations to resolve the issues. (See attached) The recommendations are as follows:

- Placing a door that has a one-hour smoke/fire rating at either the top or bottom of the current stairway;
- Encasing the outside stairs and having a one-hour fire rating on the interior walls of the building on that side would make these an egress and not a fire escape;
- Remove the doorway going into the "office" by the upstairs fire exit; or
- Install a sprinkler system in the entire building to meet the parameters of this code.

Kevin did note his professional opinion is that the building is being used for the same purpose as the previous owner; there is no change in use other than going from private to public. Commissioner Gardner asked if there is an estimate of cost to install a sprinkler system.

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Renée stated she will be investigating time and cost impacts. Commissioner Gardner directed Renée to continue to make the improvements needed; sharing the impacts with the Commissioners as soon as the information is available.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved authorize the County Commissioner Chair to work with the County Manager to correct the outstanding issues to bring 24 Center Street into compliance. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

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Andy Hyland submitted a letter of concern regarding the Safety Building budget that prompted an invitation for him to attend the meeting. Andy stated he was present to discuss the current cost estimate and scope of work. He stated both Port City Architecture and Sheridan Construction are concerned that the Washington County Sheriff's office is still approximately \$400,000.00 over budget; this amount does not take into account the contingency amount. Andy stated the County continues to reject the recommendations to reduce the cost of the project. Andy noted they have the County's best interest at heart. Commissioner Gardner stated the Board has been kept informed of their concerns. All Commissioners are in support of the Building Committees rejection to decrease the size of the building. Wesley Jordan of Sheridan stated the beauty of having a Construction Manager is that it will allow the possibility to keep within funds. Soft costs that can be illuminated or deferred was discussed. Josh Rolfe stated a savings of \$200,000.00 can be taken from the budget in soft cost cuts. Commissioner Gardner pointed out the demolition for 82 Court Street was a built-in budget of \$75,000.00; that cost came in at \$22,000.00. Andy stated he just wanted the County to be forewarned of their concerns. Commissioner Gardner reiterated that, by consensus, the Board supports the Building Committee to move forward with maintaining the original proposed size of the Safety Building, and cutting costs from soft cost expenditures. He also noted the Board is not willing to go to special bond for additional funds. Andy assured the Board of Commissioners that Port City Architecture and Sheridan Construction was confident they can continue to work with the County moving forward. Commissioner Gardner inquired about provisions on liability insurance requirements on subcontractors. Wesley Jordan stated there are minimum limits on coverage and "builders' risk" insurance will be maintained.

Treasurer Jill Holmes noted the ARPA funds are restricted on a timeframe to be used by 2026. Wesley stated construction is on track

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to begin in May.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments

Commissioner Gardner reported that LUPC rejected the proposed mining project at Pickett Mountain. He blamed the reason the project was killed was due to the fact that Franklin County did not have representation on the LUPC Board.

Commissioner Gardner stated he will have a letter of support for the naming of a Naval Ship the Margareta at next month's Commissioners' meeting.

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EMA Director Lisa Hanscom gave the Commissioners a report on the Communications/EOC Upgrade Grant. The grant is a DOJ funded grant in the amount of \$3,178,000.00. Lisa presented a summary breakdown of the costs associated with the communications upgrade. Lisa also provided the contract with Motorola for equipment and services related to this upgrade. Commissioner Gardner asked if there is any unfunded contingency. Lisa stated \$75,000.00 is established for unfunded contingency.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 3-0. It was 5:20 p.m.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

MOTION The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 5:30 p.m.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

MOTION Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Randolph Look as full-time Buildings and Grounds Maintenance effective 02/15/24.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

ADJOURNMENT

5:36 p.m.

ATTEST: _____

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Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.