

January 11, 2024

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held January 11, 2024  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:**

**Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Christopher Thornton, MDEA  
Lynn Dwelley, D.A.'s Office Machias  
Randolph Look, Columbia  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Rich Rolfe, WCSO, Jail Administrator  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office Machias  
Megan Huffman, Finance  
Tammy Gay, Deeds  
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO  
Josh Rolfe, WCSO/RCC  
Darlen Perry, Probate**

**Commissioner John Crowley, Sr. was not present.**

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Executive Department business was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on  
December 6, 2023. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the Emergency Management Agency and Sunrise County Economic Council. The reports were accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom provided a Motorola Funding Breakdown. This is for a DOJ Grant for \$3.178 million. Treasurer Jill Holmes noted one draw-down has been completed and stated the reimbursement was a quick turn-around. RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated there are many moving pieces. This will bring all emergency agencies into compliance with digital radios.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the following resignations without prejudice:

- Everett Blair as part-time Corrections Officer effective 12/30/23;
- Andrew Seavey as part-time Patrol Deputy effective 10/24/23;
- Jeffrey Erickson as part-time IT effective 11/21/23.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to reclassified Adam Imhoff from part-time to full-time ECS effective 01/01/24.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated Adam's reclassification to full-time fills one of the two newly created positions per the approved FY 2024 budget.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to reclassified Anna Strout from part-time to full-time Patrol Deputy effective 01/16/24.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

It was noted Anna's reclassification to full-time brings the Sheriff's Office to a full contingent.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Christopher Thornton as full-time MDEA Supervisor effective 01/01/24.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Chief Deputy Crabtree stated, as a matter of record, this position is a non-union hourly position per the M.O.U. for employment. The position is 100% reimbursable; funded by Maine Drug Enforcement Agency. The position is not a permanent position for County of Washington but Chief Deputy Crabtree anticipates it may become the permanent head-quarters for MDEA in the future.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Randolph Look as part-time Buildings and Grounds Maintenance effective 01/07/24.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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**AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificates**

A six-month certificate for Tyler Dunbar was signed as presented.

**AGENDA ITEM: Set Overlay and County Tax Interest Rate,  
Treasurer Jill Holmes**

Treasurer Jill Holmes provided history of the overlay for the previous three years and percentage charged for interest. (See attached) The overlay was set at 0.5% for 2021, 2022 and 2023. The interest rate for late tax payments has been set at 5% for the previous three years. Jill recommends the Board of Commissioners' set both overlay and percentage charged for interest at the same rate as the previous years.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to set the overlay at 0.5% and the percentage charged for interest at 5% for 2024 as recommended. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Treasurer Jill Holmes requested the Commissioners reschedule the February meeting from Thursday, February 8<sup>th</sup> to Thursday, February 15<sup>th</sup> in order to have TAN paperwork available for the Commissioners' approval and signatures. By consensus, the February meeting has been rescheduled to February 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM: Formal Action on NCEU Reopener**

County Manager Renée Gray stated that during the previous meeting during an Executive Session the NCEU requested to renegotiate a wage increase for 2024. The reopener provision is in the NCEU contract under Article 26-Wages, Section 4. The request was discussed but no formal decision was made. Renée asked the Commissioners to make a formal decision.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to agree to an additional 3% above the 5% for a total base wage increase of 8% effective January 1, 2024 per the M.O.U. Agreement by and between the NCEU and the Washington County Board of Commissioners. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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**AGENDA ITEM: Review Roof Bids for Jail and Courthouse**

County Manager Renée Gray presented roof repair bids for the Jail and

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Courthouse from Armor Roofing. County Manager Renée Gray stated an RFP for bids was published but no bids were received. She then solicited a quote with Armor Roofing. Armor Roofing submitted two main options for the slate roof repair and an amount for the jail roof repair. The options are as follows:

1. New Slate Roof - A completely new slate roof renovation:  
\$580,899.52
2. Slate Repair - inspect and replace what is needed: \$25,000.00
3. Membrane Roof Repair - repair on jail roof (depending on damage that cannot be determined by surface inspection ): \$ 8,600.00

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize the County Manager to proceed with the roof repairs on the Jail and Courthouse accepting options #2 as presented. Option #3 is accepted with the understanding the cost may be more or less depending on the damage found. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

It was noted the Sheriff's building roof will need attention soon. Renée asked the Commissioners if they would be interested in getting a quote from Armor Roofing to include slate repair on the Sheriff's building. By consensus, the Commissioners asked that Armor Roofing submit another quote in writing to include the Sheriff's Office for them to consider.

**AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update**

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. (See attached) Renée stated the deficiencies cited by the Fire Marshall have been corrected and resubmitted for approval.

Renée reported the D.A. staff is very happy with their new location. She noted there is a plan to have an Open House. The date is yet to be determined. Susan Sullivan noted the concern they had for file space has all been worked out. Commissioner Gardner asked that, if at

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all possible, any needs that can be identified early be brought to the Commissioners' attention. Renée concluded that the unaudited expenditure to date for the D.A.'s Building renovations total \$40,327.07.

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Renée then gave an update on the new Public Safety Building. She stated the project status for Port City Architecture is at 40% total completion which equals \$149,412.00. Renée stated the Building Committee and Port City Architecture has come to a crossroads. Port City has made a recommendation to the Building Committee to reduce the original floor plan by 984 sf to save \$400,000.00 on the project and to stay on budget. The Building Committee has two options to keep the project within budget.

- Option A) Keep original dimensions as planned and reduce soft costs for savings;
- Option B) Reduce square footage of the building by approximately 1,200 sf and keep all soft costs.

Josh Rolfe stated that after long and lengthy discussions, the consensus of the Building Committee is to keep the building the original size and find ways to cut the soft costs. Josh pointed out that Port City is recommending a survey be done. Josh stated there is no need to waste the money on a survey. The Committee has not looked at a smaller option because it is not an option. Commissioner Gardner stated that at the end of the day, we (Washington County) are the customer and we want the original size. To show their backing,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to support the Building Committee and express to Port City that Washington County is not interested in a reduction of the building size and tasks the Building Committee to keep within budget by saving in the soft costs. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Renée concluded her Safety Building update with an update on 82 Court Street. Renée reported that an RFP was published for the demolition of the existing building. A deadline for the demolish is set for April 30<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Gardner asked that the Risk Pool is notified for insurance purposes.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments**

Commissioner Gardner stated he attended the legislative session regarding LD 630; a bill proposed to ensure rural law enforcement service in Maine. The bill would appropriate funds to establish these measures. Commissioner Gardner stated he testified in support of the bill. Commissioner Gardner noted that LD 630 was meant to be a way

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for the state to step up and help carry their side of the equation. Commissioner Gardner stated the Commissioners did not want to raise taxes and was determined to "take the fight to the state". Commissioner Gardner lamented the plan "went completely off the rails". Commissioner Gardner noted that the two most rural and poor counties, Piscataquis and Washington, have no state police coverage. He also noted a fund sharing proposal would have provided only \$84,000.00 to Washington County, yet, under that same proposal, Cumberland County would have received over \$1.4 million. Commissioner Gardner pointed out this proposal does not focus on the rural patrol issues. Commissioner Gardner concluded the Board of Commissioners will continue to fight for funds and/or coverage. Sheriff Curtis noted the Maine Sheriff's Association will be meeting to discuss how to gain support on funding for rural patrol. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated we (the County) needs to become self-sufficient. Commissioner Gardner concluded the County still needs to work with the State to legislate funding. He asked for continued support in this endeavor.

Commissioner Cassidy gave praise to Renée and the team that worked diligently to prepare the Talbot Building for office space.

**\*MOTION\***                    **Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 3:11 p.m. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**\*MOTION\***                    **The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 3:25 p.m. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

No decision.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**3:25 p.m.**

**ATTEST:**

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.