

January 13, 2022

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held January 13, 2022  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Josh Rolfe, WCSO  
David Bibber, Charlotte  
Tammy Gay, Deeds  
Marlene Sprague, Deeds  
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA  
Darlene Perry, Probate  
Carlene M. Holmes, Probate**

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

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Executive Department business was called to order at 4:12 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on December 19, 2021. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

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

**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to reclassify Whitney Bassett from part-time to full-time Corrections Officer effective 12/26/21. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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By the recommendation of Sheriff Curtis, Christopher Simpson was promoted to Sergeant in the Patrol Division effective 01/02/22.

Travis Willey has been reclassified from Patrol Deputy to Detective in the Sheriff's Department effective 01/02/22. The position of Detective is a new position approved in the budget for 2022. It was noted that two detective positions were budgeted for 2022. Sheriff Curtis stated only one has been filled for now; the second detective position will be filled soon.

With the recommendation of Sheriff Curtis,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Abbey Allen as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 01/02/22. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Philip Taylor as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 01/16/22. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

It was noted that Patrol Deputy Allen will be attending the Academy in August. It was also noted that Patrol Deputy Taylor was half way through the 100-hour course academy training when the course was shut down. The course will resume at the end of the month. Patrol Deputy Taylor will do field training and other training requirements until he can finish his 100-hour course.

With the recommendation of U.T. Supervisor Dean Preston,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Jessica Lewis as part-time U.T. Animal Control Officer effective 01/17/22. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Tony Bennett as part-time U.T. Animal Control Officer effective 01/17/22. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

It was noted that standard part-time provisions apply to both Animal Control Officer positions.

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Ashley Seiler as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 01/13/22. Sheriff Curtis stated Patrol Deputy Seiler's resignation now leaves the Patrol

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Division down one deputy.

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With the recommendation of County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Meghann Hill as full-time Buildings and Grounds Maintenance effective 12/15/21. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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

Six-month certificates were signed for Elmer Farren, Christine Day and Marlene Sprague as presented.

**AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Tax Abatement Decisions for:  
Bibber vs. Town of Charlotte  
Jones vs. Town of Charlotte**

Commissioner Gardner stated after proper notice and hearing on the petition for tax abatement Bibber vs. Town of Charlotte and tax abatement Jones vs. Town of Charlotte held on November 4, 2021, it was determined that both appeals have been approved. Commissioner Gardner stated an approval of a tax abatement does not often happen. The Board of Commissioners gave no decision after the first hearing of both tax abatements held previously. It was the intention of the Board of Commissioners that time given after the first petition of the tax payers would have given the Town of Charlotte the opportunity to re-vamp their property evaluation process and find a resolution. No resolution was found. The decisions for an approved tax abatement for both Bibber vs. Town of Charlotte and Jones vs. Town of Charlotte were signed as presented.

**AGENDA ITEM: Set Overlay and County tax interest rate, Treasurer Jill Holmes**

A recommendation for a percentage for overlay and interest on delinquent taxes was presented. The previous three years overlay percentage has been set at .5%, and the interest rate has been set at 5.00%. Satisfied with continuing with same percentage rates for both the overlay and interest on delinquent taxes,

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to set the overlay at .5% for 2022. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to set the interest rate at 5.00% for 2022. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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**AGENDA ITEM: Washington County Vaccination Policy**

The OSHA COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) on Vaccination and Testing generally requires employers to establish, implement and enforce a written mandatory vaccination policy. The vaccine mandate requiring that workers at businesses with 100 or more employees get vaccinated or submit a negative COVID test weekly to enter the workplace was being challenged in the Supreme Court. In preparation of the mandate, a vaccination policy draft was prepared and submitted for the Commissioners' review. Just before the meeting of the Commissioners, the Supreme Court blocked the mandate. In light of the decision by the Supreme Court, Commissioner Gardner recommended tabling the vaccination policy proposal. Commissioner Gardner stated the record should reflect the ruling allows a vaccine mandate to stand for health care workers and for medical facilities that take Medicare or Medicaid payments. Commissioner Gardner stated the draft vaccine policy should be kept on hand. Commissioner Gardner stated the mandate is unconstitutional and an over-reach, but will most likely come up again. It was noted this mandate has still left Washington County EMS in a dire condition.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to table the proposed Washington County Vaccination Policy. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Ratify Clerical Union Contract**

County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald reported the clerical union agreement has been negotiated and signed by the union representatives. Betsy noted the union ratified the agreement with the following changes:

- Increases for Year 1-10%, Year 2-5%, Year 3-5%;
- Remove the longevity clause;
- Add cell phone stipend language; and
- Move Probate and Deeds Clerks to Grade V

Betsy stated the union agent signed the agreement on 12/22/21. Commissioner Gardner asked if any changes were made to accruals. Betsy replied there were no changes made to accruals.

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**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to accept and ratify the Teamsters Union Local 340 Clerical Unit Agreement as presented. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Four copies of the agreement were signed.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Discussion of Salaried Employees Percentages**

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe began the discussion. Rich stated that all salaried employees were informed by a memo from County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald that salaried employees would not be receiving the 10% increase approved by the BAC for 2022. The memo explained that salaried employees would receive a percentage increase based on their years of service in that particular position up to 10%. Rich noted that if he had received the 10% increase, he would still be the lowest paid Jail Administrator in the state. RCC Deputy Director Josh Rolfe asked the Commissioners why salaried employees were singled out to not receive the 10% every county employee received. Commissioner Gardner responded that the Commissioners made the decision to only give salaried employees a percentage increase based on their years in that position because salaried employees are different than hourly employees in many ways. Commissioner Gardner stated salaried employees have perks such as flexibility in their working hours. Commissioner Gardner noted the Commissioners' standpoint was to adjust the internal structure for salaried positions and fix the inequities. Chief Deputy Mike Crabtree stated a market adjustment was needed for salaried positions but the years of service should have been considered rather than years served in a particular position. Paula Johnson-Rolfe stated exempt employees always seem to get less; not just in pay but with benefits such as cash-in accruals, fitness incentives and other benefits that union members receive. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged the concerns being voiced. Commissioner Gardner stated the Commissioners are trying to make it equitable for all with the resources the County has. Rich Rolfe asked the Commissioners to confirm the BAC appropriated the 10% increase across the board for all employees. Commissioner Gardner stated the BAC did approve a budget that included 10% increase for all employees. Commissioner Gardner stated the BAC also discussed the inequities within the salaried employees and expected the inequities to be fixed within the budgeted amount. Commissioner Gardner explained that is why years of service in a position was considered to be a logical and fair way to give increases while balancing the inequities. Sheriff

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Curtis pointed out that Josh Rolfe is a salaried employee that has worked for the County for 27 years; yet he did not receive the full 10% increase because he has only held the salaried position of Deputy Director for 4 years. Sheriff Curtis stated that an employee that has stayed with the County for 27 years deserves to be recognized for their years of service and deserves the 10% increase. Commissioner Gardner acknowledged the reasoning to consider years of service instead of years served in a position. Commissioner Gardner agreed

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recognition should be given to those that have stayed at the County for many years. Commissioner Cassidy stated he would agree with refiguring the increases based on years of service only. Commissioner Gardner stated there is so many varying jobs in the county structure. Commissioner Gardner stated this is the first step in closing the gaps of inequities. Commissioner Gardner stated there will be more discussions on wages and benefits.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to approve adjusting the pay scale increases for salaried employees for 2022 to reflect years of service with the County. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Commissioner Gardner stated those adjustments will be paid in the next payroll.

**AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update**

Commissioner Gardner stated the Federal Treasury has released new guidelines for the use of ARPA Recovery Funds. One of the updates allows counties to use up to \$10 million of ARPA Recovery funds as "lost revenue" for the provision of general government services without needing to use the Treasury revenue loss formula. Commissioner Gardner stated this will give the County more flexibility to use the funds on what is needed. County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald confirmed that the RFP for designs for a new public safety building has been published. Betsy reported she has heard from four Architectural and Engineering firms. Betsy noted she will wait until the end of the month to review all RFP's that have been received. Betsy stated she will plan on providing the Commissioners with the RFP results during the February meeting. The Building Committee has continued discussing ideas for the location of the new safety building. Josh Rolfe recommended tearing down the old District Attorney's Office on Court Street and use that space for the new safety building. Commissioner Gardner recommends the Building

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Committee consider using the lower parking lot located on the corner of Center and Court Street as the location for the new safety building. Josh Rolfe agreed building in the lower parking lot may make sense.

Commissioner Gardner confirmed Washington County has already committed ARPA funds for the purchase of the 24 Center Street Talbot Building and the Spillman RMS/CAD system upgrade.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Informational Materials**

The Commissioners received informational materials for their review.

**\*MOTION\*** Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 5:15 p.m.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

**\*MOTION\*** The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 5:30 p.m.  
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

No decision.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
5:30 p.m.

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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