

June 12, 2025

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held June 12, 2025  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner David C. Burns  
Commissioner Hammond, Sr.  
Commissioner Billy Howard  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Josh Rolfe, WCSO / RCC  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Paul Sylvain, Machias Valley News Observer, Machias  
Lisa M. Hanscom, WNEMA  
Tammy Gay, Deeds  
Heather Green, Deeds  
Charlene Hammond, PRAS  
Dennis Dorsey, WCSO  
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Darlene Perry, Probate**

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Executive Department business was called to order at 4:15 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on May 22, 2025 as amended. (Howard / Hammond, 3-0)**

Commissioner Burns asked that the record reflect an amendment to the meeting minutes of May 22, 2025. During the May meeting, Commissioner Burns gave an update on the Legislative Policy Committee. It was noted in the minutes that Commissioner Burns stated "most bills have passed through to the committees." Commissioner Burns noted the minutes should have stated that "most bills have passed through to the Appropriations and Affairs Committee".

**AGENDA ITEM: Old Business**

- County Manager Renée Gray stated there still has been no interest in the granite slabs that were put out for bid. Commissioner Burns asked for suggestions. Renée suggested the County could

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- keep them and use them for landscaping. Commissioner Howard stated the county should not continue to advertise but suggested leaving the bid request on the county website.

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the Department Heads. (See attached)

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom reported there will be a HazMat/Mass Casualty Functional Exercise on June 17<sup>th</sup> on Rt. 9 at the Wesley Elementary School. Lisa explained what the basic scenario of the exercise will be and noted there should be an elected official to represent to the County. Commissioner Burns asked what type of role would the elected official play, and could the Sheriff fulfil that role. Lisa stated the Sheriff will be present but will be fulfilling the role of law enforcement. Lisa noted the representation was not required but just a suggestion. County Manager Renée Gray stated she will attend the exercise on behalf of the Commissioners. Lisa also gave an update on the *I AM RESPONDING* paging app. Lisa explained some of the challenges she has dealt with for this program. She noted Dennis Dorsey has been working through some of the IT issues. Lisa stated she has been having some difficulty with getting all fire departments set up. She noted eventually all fire department will be able to see and know who is responding to an emergency as well as RCC. Commissioner Burns noted most fire departments are struggling just to keep their heads above water. Lastly, Lisa reported the EMA department is still working to implement the RAVE program. RAVE is a program to summons help by cell phone and alert other employees of a situation. She stated it is a safety feature that could cover all county work areas. Lisa explained the RAVE program was initiated through grant funds. She stated the paperwork delayed the roll-out of the programs' implementation. The first year of the program is free and that time period is drawing to an end. Lisa stated she may be looking to fund this program through other grants or possibly build into the budget. Commissioner Burns directed Lisa to present the program in writing for further discussion.

Chief Deputy Michael Crabtree gave a brief summary for the Sheriff's Office. He reported there were 826 calls for service; approximately an increase of 100 calls from the previous month. Mike noted the deputies continue to work well with MDEA. Mike stated the furniture

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for the new building has arrived. Mike noted the fiber network still needs to be run and locks still need to be installed in some areas.

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Mike reported the Sheriff's Office has begun to receive requests from towns for parade detail. Commissioner Burns requested the Sheriff's Office submit a written report next month. Mike stated there will be a written report submitted next month.

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated Pharmacore, the institutional pharmacy the jail has been using for decades, will no longer provide on-line medications. Rich checked with other facilities to find another provider. He found that others are using Diamond Pharmacy Services. Rich asked the Commissioners to allow him to execute the contract with Diamond as it is an emergency to get this service in place. Rich stated he will continue to use a local pharmacy for emergency medications needed, but will order bulk supplies through Diamond Pharmacy.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Burns moved to approve the contract with Diamond Pharmacy Services and authorize Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe to execute said contract.  
(Burns / Hammond, 3-0)**

All other Department Head reports were accepted under the gavel.

**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

County Manager Renée Gray stated the Commissioners accepted Lynn Dwelley's resignation for her retirement at the May meeting. Renée noted Lynn has agreed to remain part-time until her position is filled.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Howard moved to reclassify Lynn Dwelley from full-time Victim-Witness Advocate to part-time Victim-Witness Advocate for the Machias District Attorney's Office effective 06/07/25.  
(Howard / Hammond, 3-0)**

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

Six-month certificates for Nathan Bean and Keaton Luce were signed as presented.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Aroostook Mental Health Services Agreement -  
Rich Rolfe, Jail Administrator**

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe presented a service agreement between Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. and Washington County Jail.

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Rich explained that by law it is required to provide crisis services to inmates. This service was provided by AMHS for many years at no charge with federal funding funneled through the state. Rich stated that approximately one and a half years ago this funding was no longer available due to funding criteria making inmates ineligible. A six-month agreement was made with AMHS to provide these services using OPIOD settlement funds. Rich noted DECH uses Acadia Telehealth Services but telehealth is not a good option. Commissioner Burns concurred that telehealth is not effective. The agreement being presented is for a twelve-month term beginning 07/01/25. Compensation is in the amount of \$38,574.68, payable in 12 monthly payments of \$3,214.55. Rich requested the Commissioners authorize County Manager Renée Gray to sign the agreement.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Howard moved to authorize County Manager Renée Gray to sign the Service Agreement between Aroostook Mental Health Services, Inc. and Washington County Jail as presented. (Howard / Hammond, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: IT Discussion - Dennis Dorsey**

Sheriff's Deputy and IT Ombudsman Dennis Dorsey presented a proposal for the Commissioners' consideration. Dennis stated he plans on resigning at the end of this year. He explained the purpose of his proposal was to help the Commissioners understand the IT needs of the County and the current situation with IT support. Dennis stated the County has a complex system and noted the County needs to have a plan for an IT Department with knowledgeable and qualified staff to support it. Dennis stated during his time working for the Sheriff's Department he has made some much-needed upgrades. He noted the need for an IT Department is essential; the business of emergency services the County provides relies on well-functioning technology. Dennis emphasized his point by stating dispatch gets bombarded with approximately 43 fire and EMS agencies operating in Washington County. Dennis stated it is no longer sustainable or responsible to operate without a dedicated IT department. Dennis stressed emphatically this issue can no longer be put off. Dennis' written proposal calls for a full-time IT director/lead technician, a full-time IT consultant/

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technician to provide daily support and a part-time IT consultant/technician. These three positions would cost \$175,000.00, not including benefits. Commissioner Burns acknowledged the county is in debt but stated that more importantly, we have an obligation to the citizens. Commissioner Howard noted it will be a challenge to find knowledgeable people willing to work. Dennis warned the

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Commissioner's that if we do not maintain the system we have, it will collapse. Commissioner Burns stated this is the first they have heard of this issue. He noted, on behalf of the Board of Commissioners, that he appreciates the perspective and they do not plan on 'kicking the can down the road'. The discussion was concluded with Chief Deputy Crabtree stating he will be presenting a more comprehensive packet at budget time.

**AGENDA ITEM: County Manager's Report**

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. (See attached)

Renée reported the municipal invitation for bulk salt bid participation has gone out. This is done each year to facilitate the best price.

Renée stated the new Sheriff's Office building is almost complete. The final punch list items include the telephone, data system and swipe card installation, and remaining furniture to be delivered.

Renée reported a Department Head meeting was held on June 4<sup>th</sup>. It was emphasized that the budget process has begun, and Department Heads should be prepared for the budget workshops that have been scheduled for June 24<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. and June 30<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. She noted the IT budget should be presented at that time.

Renée stated she met with Downeast Winds (APEX) Senior Asset Manager Bruce Chapman, John Cribbs Facility Manager, Charles Rudelitch of SCEC, and Deputy Treasurer Sondra Small on June 3<sup>rd</sup>. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Community Benefit Agreement funds that the county anticipates receiving by September. Renée noted there was a follow-up meeting with the TIF Grant Committee. It was decided that work sessions with the Commissioners should begin in August. Renée asked the Commissioners if the first workshop could be scheduled for August 14<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. By consensus, the Commissioners were in agreement to meet at that time to make plans regarding the new TIF.

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Renée reported that the auditor plans to be here this month to begin work on the 2022 audit.

Renée stated the D.A.'s Office needs monitoring for the sprinkler system as Maine Fire Protection will not turn on the sprinkler system without it. She noted she is working on gathering 3 vendor quotes. RCC Director Josh Rolfe asked if RCC would be able to monitor the

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system in-house with RCC's 24/7 staff. Renée stated she will check with Maine Fire Protection to see if that would be acceptable. She will plan on giving an update at next months' meeting.

RCC Director Josh Rolfe inquired about a warranty on the newly constructed building after its completion. Renée will check with Sheridan and report back.

**AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments**

- Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) Update
  - Commissioner Burns stated there is no new updates. The next LPC meeting is on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. Commissioner Burns noted it will be the last opportunity to give a pitch in support of the rural patrol bill.
  
- MCCA Risk Pool Update
  - None

Commissioner Howard stated he recently attended an Unorganized Territories tax meeting. He noted people are unhappy about the increase in taxes. The concern is that windmills and solar farms are driving up taxes; the tax breaks expected from the TIF agreements do not seem to be off-setting the taxes for landowners. Commissioner Hammond noted he has had many calls regarding this issue.

Commissioner Hammond stated this issue is not just in Washington County but state-wide. There was a suggestion to place a moratorium on all wind farms. U.T. Supervisor Heron Weston stated he would be interested to see an actual tax bill as the budget was not increased; the same amount of funds was to be raised but was just redistributed. Heather Green noted the mil rate went down. Commissioner Howard stated valuations went through the roof. Commissioner Hammond noted most land valuations are causing property taxes to be unaffordable to the average taxpayer.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

**5:15 p.m.**

**ATTEST:**

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**Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.**