

March 14, 2024

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'  
Regular Meeting  
held March 14, 2024  
in the Probate Courtroom  
Machias, Maine**

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**Attending the meeting were:  
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner  
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy  
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.  
Renée Gray, County Manager  
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant  
Dean A. Preston, Unorganized Territories  
Jill C. Holmes, Finance  
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office  
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO  
Barry Curtis, Sheriff  
Rich Rolfe, WCSO  
Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy  
Tammy Gay, Deeds  
Darlene Perry, Probate  
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA**

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Executive Department business was called to order at 4:13 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on February 15, 2024. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports**

The Commissioners were provided written reports from the County Manager, the Treasurer's Office and RCC. The reports were accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

**AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices**

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Jordan Dudley as full-time Corrections Officer effective 03/08/24.

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Ryan Murry as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 02/29/24. Sheriff Barry Curtis stated Patrol Deputy Murry has accepted a position with the Maine State Police. Reimbursement for Ryan's attendance at the Maine

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Criminal Justice Academy was discussed. Chief Deputy Crabtree reported the state will be reimbursing the County. In turn, those funds will likely be paid back out to the Town of Machias. Ryan's replacement has been a Police Officer for Machias and has recently completed certification at the MCJA. Commissioner Gardner inquired about the normal procedure for receiving reimbursement funds from other agencies. Treasurer Jill Holmes responded the funds are kept in a separate line and used for the purpose of training for the Sheriff's Office. Those funds are also typically needed to send someone to the MCJA.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Emmitt Gardner as part-time Corrections Officer effective 03/10/24.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Sheriff Curtis recommended hiring Timothy Cote as a part-time Patrol Deputy effective 03/12/24. It was stated Mr. Cote will be a part-time investigator for the District Attorney's Office. Commissioner Gardner questioned the hiring as the County had not decided to fund a part-time investigator for the District Attorney's Office. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated Mr. Cote is a Commissioned Deputy for Hancock County and works as an investigator for the Hancock D.A.'s Office. Chief Deputy Crabtree also noted D.A. Granger was using his authority under statute to hire Mr. Cote as a part-time investigator for the Washington County D.A.'s Office. Chief Deputy Crabtree suggested a M.O.U. be crafted to document an agreement between the Sheriff's Office of Hancock and Washington County. Commissioner Gardner agreed that is well within Sheriff Curtis' prevue to hire a part-time deputy but more information regarding the recommended hire should be known before final approval is made. Administrative Assistant Susan Sullivan stated she knew nothing of the intention to hire an investigator for the Washington County D.A.'s Office. Sheriff Curtis stated he had hoped D.A. Granger would be present at the meeting to answer any questions. Commissioner Gardner asked the Sheriff if the decision to hire Mr. Cote could wait until next month. Sheriff Curtis stated he could wait. By consensus, the Commissioners agreed to put a hold on the recommended hire of Tim Cote as part-time Patrol Deputy and investigator for the Washington County D.A.'s Office until further details regarding the position is available.

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

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None.

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**AGENDA ITEM: Approval of Purchase of Cruiser - Sheriff's Office**

Chief Deputy Crabtree presented a request for approval to purchase a cruiser. He explained that the request was short notice due to the fact that a cruiser was recently totaled and due to the specialty nature of the vehicle needed. Commissioner Gardner asked if three vendors had been contacted. Chief Deputy Crabtree confirmed that three vendors had been contacted; Yankee Ford of South Portland, Varney Ford in Bangor and Quirk Ford in Augusta. Quirk Ford in Augusta was the only vendor that had a 2023 F150 Police Responder vehicle available and able to install all parts needed and required for the Sheriff's Office. The purchase price is \$46,664.00.

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Crowley moved to authorize the purchase of a 2023 F150 Police Responder from Quirk Ford in Augusta with a purchase price of \$46,664.00. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Clarification on Auditor's Terms of Contract**

Treasurer Jill Holmes stated it was recently discovered that minutes of a commissioners' meeting to award the audit services reflected two years for the terms of the contract. Jill noted the RFP and the proposals received was for a three-year term; for the fiscal years ending December 31, 2019, 2020 and 2021 for Washington County and the U.T. fiscal years ending June 30, 2019, 2020 and 2021. Jill asked that the records reflect an amendment to the previous commissioners' meeting minutes. Under the advisement of the Treasurer;

**\*MOTION\* Commissioner Cassidy moved to amend the Commissioners' previous minutes and have the record reflect the auditing services awarded to Stephen T. Hopkins CPA, PC are a three-year term as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

**AGENDA ITEM: Schedule Tax Abatement Hearing - Ross vs. Town of Lubec**

A tax abatement hearing has been scheduled for Ross vs. Town of Lubec to be held on Thursday, May 9, 2024 at 3 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update**

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County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. See attached. Renée noted the demolition of 82 Court Street building is complete, and construction of the new safety building is scheduled to begin on May 6, 2024.

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Renée reported an unsolicited estimate of over \$40,000.00 has been recommended to bring the 24 Center Street D.A. Building into life safety code compliance. This amount reflects the costs to construct an enclosure around the fire escape and install a 1-hour fire rated door in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway. An alternative idea is to install a sprinkler system. An RFP has been issued and bids have been solicited for installation of a sprinkler system. Bid results will be presented at the April Commissioners' meeting.

Commissioner Gardner recommended the granite from the 82 Center Street building be used as a corner stone near the Masonic Hall which is on the adjoining property. Sheriff Curtis stated he is working on this.

**AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments**

Commissioner Gardner reported that the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is leading a lawsuit in the case of *Andrew Robbins, et al v. Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services, et al* No. KENSC-CV-22-54. Sheriff Curtis has received a notice of the filing of Plaintiffs' Motion for Leave to Amend and proposed First Amended Complaint as a named Respondent in the case. It was noted the Risk Pool will not be involved. It was also noted that the County Attorney John Hamer has been made aware of the notice. The issue is in regards to the bill guaranteeing a speedy trial and the State of Maine not being able to provide defense attorneys for defendants awaiting trial. Sheriff Curtis stated there are only four defense attorneys in Washington County. Chief Deputy Crabtree commented that this is all about pre-trial. Commissioner Gardner voiced his concern of releasing those in custody without a trial due to the inability of the State of Maine Court system's inability to provide indigent legal services in a timely manner. Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe noted the need to exercise caution. He stated his concerns about incarcerated but not convicted persons being released without bail because they cannot be provided legal services that are not available. Rich stated he has been the Jail Administrator for 11 years and he only sees the situation getting worse. Commissioner Gardner suggested the Board of Commissioners must take a public position. Commissioner Gardner

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requested the support of the Board of Commissioners for him to contact legal for the purpose of being prepared for the direction of this lawsuit. By consensus, the Board of Commissioners agree that Commissioner Gardner represent the County and engage with legal council in preparation of legal fall-out.

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**\*MOTION\***            Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Crowley seconded the motion which passed 3-0. It was 4:56 p.m.  
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

**\*MOTION\***            The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 5:12 p.m.  
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

No motion.

**ADJOURNMENT**  
5:12 p.m.

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

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