

March 20, 2025

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held March 20, 2025
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

Attending the meeting were:

**Commissioner David C. Burns
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Billy Howard
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Bob Berta, East Machias
Galen Williamson, Northeastern Workforce Development
Heron Weston, U.T. Supervisor
Paul Sylvain, Machias / MVNO
Nancy Harrison, Lubec
Ed Harrison, Lubec
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Betsy Fitzgerald, Machiasport
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Heather Green, Deeds
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Megan Huffman, Finance
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Josh Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Rich Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Mike Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Saydee Plaster, EMDC
Michelle Murphy, EMDC
Darlene Perry, Probate**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:52 p.m.

**AGENDA ITEM: Northeastern Workforce Development Board Update -
 Galen Williamson**

County Manager Renée Gray introduced Galen Williamson to the Board of Commissioners. Galen is the Executive Director of Northeastern Workforce Development Board. Galen stated he was present to provide a program updated to the Commissioners. Galen explained NWDB covers five counties; Aroostook, Hancock, Penobscot, Piscataquis and

March 20, 2025

28

Washington. Galen noted there are three local area boards that administers Title 1 B (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) funds. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market. Galen stated the local boards allocate funds to three programs that benefit Washington County; adult, youth and dislocated worker programs. Galen explained the Adult Program serves those that have been unemployed for a period of time or may have barriers finding employment. Galen continued that the Youth Program is designated to help those between the ages of 14 and 24 but generally serves those that are 16 years old and up. He stated this program supports youth just completing education and trying to obtain or retain employment. Galen stated the program for dislocated workers help individuals who have been laid off or terminated for no fault of their own. These individuals can receive training for high demand and/or high wage occupations. Galen noted funds are allocated each year and are based on economic needs. Ten percent of the funds are used to administer the programs and 90% go directly to the programs. It was also noted the Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing and complying with funds use. Galen stated Commissioner Howard was appointed to the board to represent the Commissioners. Galen stated transparency is important to NWDB and noted the website, northeasternwdb.org, is a vehicle for communication. The website includes the policies, board meeting minutes and updates. Galen introduced Saydee Plaster. Saydee is a workforce specialist for NWDB. Galen stated Saydee works with the dislocated workers. Galen also introduced Michelle Murphy who has recently been hired by Eastern Maine Development Corporation as a Care Support Specialist. Galen noted both Saydee and Michelle would like an opportunity to explain their rolls in the program. Saydee gave a description of her role as a workforce specialist. She stated she is located at the Machias Career Center. She offers vocational rehabilitation, engages with local businesses, holds information interviews, arranges job shadowing experiences and helps individuals explore career opportunities. She gave examples of several success stories that her work has helped accomplish. Next, Michelle Murphy gave testimony to her success with the help of the NWDB program. She began by stating she is a new care support specialist for EMDC. She explained that her primary role will be working with the jail conversion program. Michelle noted she was previously "justice involved". She continued that she had difficulty finding employment after conviction and incarceration. Michelle stated while at the Career Center supporting her son with his job search efforts, she was

March 20, 2025

referred to Saydee Plaster. Saydee discussed career interests with Michelle and helped her build a resume. With this support, she

29

applied for and successfully obtain the position of care support specialist for EMDC. Michelle stated she will be working with workforce development service team members, the jail diversion program, and community members that have a past like her own. Commissioner Burns congratulated Michelle on her success story. Commissioner Howard asked if the NWDB is working with the technical centers. Galen responded that NWDB is working with the technical centers and noted they are good partners. Commissioner Howard asked about future updates. Saydee stated they are required to report weekly and success stories are included in their quarterly reports. Commissioner Burns asked how the board of directors are made up. Galen responded the board members are 51% businesses and 49% workforce. Galen noted they are running with a minimum size board with 21 members. They would like to have one more business on the board.

With no further questions or comments, Commissioner Burns called the regular Executive Department business to order at 4:52 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on February 20, 2025. (Crowley / Howard, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Old Business

➤ **Signatures on Six-month Certificates**

- Six-month certificates were signed for Heather Hanson and Gordon Faulkingham as presented.

➤ **Sick Time Policy**

- Commissioner Burns stated comparisons of sick time policies from other counties have been gathered to be used as a guideline while reviewing Washington Counties policy on sick time carry over. Commissioner Burns noted our policy is not much different than most. Currently, all employees can carry up to 600 hours of sick time. A request had been made for non-union employees to be able to carry above and beyond 600 hours. This request was made in 2018. It was decided at that time to allow all hours to remain on the books until a comprehensive review was done. Rich Rolfe stated he and Administrative Assistant Paula Johnson-Rolfe will lose many hours of accumulated sick time if they are held to the 600

March 20, 2025

hours per county policy. Commissioner Howard questioned why the review has taken so long. He also commented that if the county policy is to cap sick accruals at 600 hours, then they should be capped at that. Commissioner Burns asked if

30

- o there was any interest in increasing the maximum carry-over of sick time to 720 hours for non-union employees.

MOTION **Commissioner Burns moved to change the sick time policy for non-union employees to allow for a maximum of ninety (90) days (720 hours) of sick time to be accrued and carried forward from one calendar year to the next. Additional sick days beyond 90 days will be forfeited. (Burns / Crowley, 3-0)**

➤ **Approval of Revised Safety Manual**

- o County Manager Renée Gray stated the Safety Committee was revitalized. The Committee, led by Heather Green and Darlene Perry, has been working on updating the Safety Manual and they have a final product for the Commissioners' approval.

MOTION **Commissioner Burns moved to approve the revised Safety Manual as presented. (Burns / Howard, 3-0)**

➤ **Lease Agreement with State of Maine for MDEA Space in Safety Building**

- o County Manager Renée Gray presented a final lease agreement between County of Washington and the State of Maine, Department of Administrative and Financial Services. The agreement is for leased space for the MDEA office in the new Safety Building. The original proposal for the office space was for an amount of \$427 per month. The board of Commissioners directed Renée to negotiate with a counter proposal for an amount of \$650.00 per month. Renée reported the proposal was accepted and a final agreement has been signed.

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

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

March 20, 2025

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe stated he would like to reinstate the practice of collecting copayments from residents in the jail. He stated there is a statute that allows for this practice. The practice was discontinued during the Covid pandemic. Rich recommends the following copays: \$3.00 for prescriptions, \$5.00 for medical

31

treatment and \$5 for dental treatment. Commissioner Howard asked if the copayment comes back to the county to recoup expenses. Rich affirmed that it would. Rich noted there are several exemptions to the copays. With the recommendation of Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe;

***MOTION* Commissioner Howard moved to approve the reinstatement of collecting copayments from jail residents for services as presented. (Howard / Crowley, 3-0)**

EMA Director Lisa Hanscom asked the Commissioners if they would like her to give them a detailed report on grant funding sources and the flow of those funds. Commissioner Howard replied that it would be helpful to know funding sources. Commissioner Howard stated he had a conversation with Roger Holst regarding a grant for a tower repeater project. Commissioner Howard stated Mr. Holst said he could have done the project for less expense. Lisa responded that she had contacted Mr. Holst requesting his collaboration and guidance in the grant for this project. Mr. Holst told her he was preparing to retire and was not interest in being involved. Lisa stated Tier II reports were due by March 1, 2025. She reported 85 agencies and departments have submitted their reports leaving only three agencies still needing to submitted theirs.

Registrar of Deeds Tammy Gay reported on the bill to increase recording and surcharge fees, LD 358. Tammy noted the increase will not be substantial. She stated the Registry of Deeds Association will be scheduling work sessions. Tammy also reported on LD 915, an act to of Modernize Deed Duplication from Microfilm to a Digital Image. She noted there is a Public Hearing regarding this bill scheduled for March 24, 2025. The Registry of Deeds Association President will attend the hearing. Tammy stated Washington County Deeds already has everything digitized. Commissioner Howard asked Tammy about concerns with deed fraud. Tammy stated Deeds has Property Fraud Alert. She noted there is a link on the County website for this service.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

March 20, 2025

By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of Colleen Conrad as part-time U.T. ACO/Shellfish Warden effective 01/15/25.

By consensus, the Commissioners also accepted the resignation of Kenneth Smead as full-time Corrections Officer effective 03/02/25. Kenneth will remain in Corrections as part-time.

32

MOTION **Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Albert Alley as full-time Corrections Officer effective 03/09/25. (Crowley / Howard, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificates

None.

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on County Tax Commitment

Treasurer Jill Holmes presented the Tax Commitment Letter for 2025 for the Commissioners signatures. Jill also presented a memorandum to be sent with each towns tax bill encouraging each municipality to consider making installment payments toward paying their annual County Taxes. Jill explained in the memo that this would improve the County's cash flow and ultimately save interest expense for the County.

MOTION **Commissioner Howard moved to approve the County Tax Commitment Letter for 2025 as well as the attached memorandum. (Howard / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: County Manager's Report

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

- Renée reported the elevators have all been inspected and will be weight tested. Renée noted that Kone will begin repair work on the prisoner elevator next week. She also stated Enviroserve will be doing the cleanup work in the elevator shaft. Renée reported all elevator licenses have been renewed with the exception of one; this particular elevator needs a CAT test before the license can be renewed.

March 20, 2025

- Renée stated a Department Head meeting was held on March 12th. Following the Department Head meeting, the Safety Committee met. The Safety Committee has completed updating the Safety Manual and will now begin updating the Emergency Response Plan. The new RAVE panic button system was also discussed at the Department Head meeting. Renée explained the RAVE panic button system has been established through a grant obtained by EMA. The system will be used to alert all employees of emergency situations.

33

- Renée gave an update on the new Safety Building. She stated the masonry work is done and the project is nearing completion. Renée noted a ribbon-cutting date will be scheduled for May.
- Renée reported she has been attending the weekly Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) meetings by ZOOM.
- Renée stated the TIF Grant Committee will begin meeting monthly in preparation of the new Community Benefit agreement with Downeast Wind.
- Renée reported the D.A.'s Office sprinkler system is nearing completion.
- Renée stated the new fire control panel was installed. She noted that after the installation of the panel, it was discovered that additional work is needed for the Sheriff's Office and the RCC fire alarm systems to communicate to the new panel. Renée explained the additional work will cost \$3,254.48. Renée requested the Commissioners' approval for the additional cost.

MOTION **Commissioner Burns moved to approve the additional expense of \$3,254.48 for additional work to the fire alarm system as presented. (Burns / Crowley, 3-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments

Commissioner Burns gave an update on bills in the legislature.

- LD 870 - a bill being presented to increase the members on the LUPC board from 9 to 13. Commissioner Burns stated the County Manager Renée Gray submitted written testimony opposing the bill.
- LD 461 - a bill that provides funding for four Maine State

March 20, 2025

Trooper positions for rural patrol coverage in Washington County.
The Commissioners are in support of this bill.

ADJOURNMENT

5:34 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.