

May 14, 2020

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held May 14, 2020
in the Washington County Superior Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner
Commissioner John B. Crowley, Sr.
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Betsy Fitzgerald, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Rich Rolfe, WCSO
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Lynn Dwelley, WNEMA
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Carlene Holmes, Probate
Dean Preston, Unorganized Territories**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:10 p.m.

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on March 12, 2020. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting of April 9, 2020. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

The Commissioners were provided a written report from the Treasurer's Office and Sunrise County Economic Council. The reports were accepted under the gavel. (See attached)

Commissioner Gardner asked Emergency Management Director, Lynn Dwelley to give an update and guidance on the current state of emergency. Lynn stated Maine Emergency Management is asking everyone to exercise strict adherence to the orders given by the CDC and Governor as the State of Maine begins to reopen. Lynn stated the public is encouraged to proceed with caution.

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AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificates

Six-month certificates were presented for Amanda Barnard, Justin

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Lawson and Denise Sullivan. All certificates were signed as presented.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

By consensus, the Commissioner's recognized the resignation of Alan Stanwood as part-time Patrol Deputy effective 03/21/20.

Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe addressed April fuller's situation. Under the recommendation of Captain Rolfe,

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to terminate April Fuller as full-time Corrections Officer effective 05/14/20.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Captain Rolfe stated April Fuller's termination is not a reflection of her work. April was unable to obtain a medical clearance. Commissioner Gardner recognized the years April has served Washington County in the capacity of a Corrections Officer and stated the termination will be accepted without prejudice.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Wayne Robbins as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 05/17/20.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Chief Deputy Crabtree stated Wayne Robbins was hired to fill a vacant position in the Patrol Division. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated the Sheriff's Office has consulted with the Treasurer to ensure that training funds are available.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Ethan Stevens as part-time Patrol Deputy effective 05/17/20.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Benjamin Redman as part-time Corrections Officer effective 05/17/20.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

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***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Evan Ackley as part-time U.T. Summer Maintenance effective 05/14/20.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

By consensus, the Commissioners supported the recommendation for promotion of Daniel Thibodeau to Shift Supervisor in the RCC Division

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effective 05/14/20.

AGENDA ITEM: COVID-19 Update

Commissioner Gardner stated the Board of Commissioners have concerns about the repercussions to come from the COVID-19 Pandemic. County Government operations did not come to a stop as most businesses did, yet there will be an impact on budgets, payroll and taxes. Commissioner Gardner stated each and every employee will feel the effects. Commissioner Gardner invited EMA Director Lynn Dwelley to give a full update. Lynn stated beginning June 1st more businesses will be able to open. Lynn reported that things are going well in Washington County; there are still only two documented cases of COVID-19 in the County. Lynn stated there has been a shortage of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) but those items are beginning to be received. Commissioner Gardner asked if Lynn had any more sense of the statistical data to come. Lynn reported the terminology has changed from "died WITH COVID" to "died FROM COVID" to more accurately record those that have died without other life-threatening illnesses. Lynn also stated the increased ability for testing will help set the level of response that will be taken. Lynn stated the CDC is looking at different models to gather statistics from the tests that are being done. Commissioner Cassidy expressed his discouragement and frustration in so much of Washington County being shut down with so few cases being reported. Chief Deputy Crabtree noted that hospital data is being tracked by the State, and in that model the COVID-19 peak was April 17th indicating the worst is behind us. Commissioner Gardner applauded Lynn for how she has handled this Pandemic in her capacity as Emergency Management Director. Commissioner Gardner noted the Commissioners' are appreciative of Lynn gathering facts, keeping calm, and even-keeled in all interactions. Commissioner Gardner asked U.T. Supervisor Dean Preston for input on the U.S. Army National Guard perspective. Dean stated in the perspective of the military, this is

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a unique fight as the enemy is unseen. This fight has been taken on by the Guard's smallest element, doctor's and nurses being the smallest group. The Guard has aided in medical PPE fitting, swab testing, and expediting movement of warehouse stock. Dean stated, internally, the Guard has taken the Pandemic very seriously. Dean noted that COVID-19 is 10 times more contagious than the flu. The actions against the spread of COVID-19 are important. There were 700 soldiers on standby, but with today's mission analysis, that count has been down-graded to 150. Dean stated the science is real and COVID-19

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is real. Dean believes that distancing had a positive impact. Commissioner Gardner concluded the COVID-19 update discussion by stating we must find a balance between surviving this virus and economic destruction.

Commissioner Gardner expressed his frustration with the Maine County Commissioners Association's decision to apply for the Payroll Protection Program in the wake of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Commissioner Gardner stated the MCCA presented a motion in its last meeting to apply for the PPP. Commissioner Gardner stated he was not in support of the motion. Commissioner Gardner voted against the MCCA applying for the PPP as he did not feel the decision was appropriate. The motion did pass with a vote of 11-3. The County Commissioners of York and Knox also voted against it. Commissioner Gardner pointed out this is another reason to pull out of MCCA.

Commissioner Gardner noted there have been on-going discussions with Northern Border Regional Commission on recovery money with focus on rural counties.

Commissioner Gardner stated there has been concern from the community for the Port of Eastport to use the port for empty cruise line parking. It has been proposed that the Port allow cruise ships to dock at the Port with staff only. The cruise ships would be there for three to six months. Every staff member would have their temperatures taken two times daily and oxygen levels checked daily. The City Manager was quick to oppose this proposal but the Governor has given the Council the vote on this decision.

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Before adjourning the meeting, Commissioner Gardner gave Department Heads the opportunity to express any concerns or comments in regards to how their offices are doing during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Emergency Management Director Lynn Dwelley commented that the National Guard has been in Washington County helping with PPE fit-testing and has been a great group to work with. It was also noted that Washington County is made up of 62% of the most vulnerable population, that of the elderly and immune compromised. Lynn noted there are four licensed nursing homes in operation in Washington County.

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ADJOURNMENT
4:51 p.m.

ATTEST: Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.