

May 9, 2024

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held May 9, 2024
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

Attending the meeting were:

**Commissioner Christopher M. Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Reid Albee, County Wide
Susan Sullivan, D.A. Office
Barry Curtis, Sheriff
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Josh Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Tammy C. Gay, Deeds
Megan Huffman, Finance
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Dean Preston, U.T.
Jill C. Holmes, Finance
Darlene Perry, Probate**

Commissioner John Crowley, Sr. was not present.

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:03 p.m.

Approval of the regular meeting minutes of April 11, 2024 was tabled until the June meeting of the Commissioners due to Commissioner Crowley's absence.

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

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

County Manager Renée Gray reported Armor Roofing expects to begin roof repairs on the Courthouse, Sheriff's building and Jail by late May.

Renée Gray stated a manlift has been scheduled for rent for one week in July to perform painting, cleaning windows, and doing gutter

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maintenance. She noted this is a shared cost with the State. The County will be reimbursed for half the cost.

Renée asked the Commissioners if they would like to do a ground breaking event for the Safety Building. Commissioner Gardner stated he had no opinion on the matter and would defer to the other two Commissioners. The event will be at the County Manager and Sheriff's discretion.

Renée reported the County was awarded a grant for Safety equipment. The grant in the amount of \$1,666.00 will be used for safety equipment for the Buildings and Grounds staff.

Treasurer Jill Holmes reported the 2020 County audit has been completed. Commissioner Gardner inquired as to when the audit for the following year will begin. Jill stated the auditor is now working on the U.T. audit for the fiscal year 2019-20. Jill anticipates the U.T. audit to be completed fairly soon then the auditor will move on to the next year.

AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

Deputy Director Josh Rolfe stated he is cleaning up his roster. He is recommending discharge for part-time employees that are no longer filling shifts. The following employees are being discharged by consensus with the recommendation of Josh Rolfe:

- Michele Johnson as part-time ECS effective 04/22/24
- Lauren Sabattus as part-time ECS effective 04/22/24
- Melissa Evans as part-time ECS effective 04/22/24

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Sarah Ferguson as part-time ECS effective 04/23/24. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire Jonathan Cole, Jr. as full-time Corrections Officer effective 05/05/24. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Gardner moved to hire Robert Dore as part-time Civil / Patrol Deputy effective 05/12/24. (Gardner / Cassidy, 2-0)**

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By consensus, the Commissioners accepted the resignation of John Birmingham as part-time Civil / Patrol Deputy effective 06/08/24. It was noted that John has worked for the Washington County Sheriff's Office for more than 25 years. The Commissioners thanked John for his years of service and wished him the best of luck.

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-month Certificate

A six-month certificate for Jan Ramos-Arroyo was signed as presented.

AGENDA ITEM: M.O.U. with State of Maine Judicial Branch for Elevator Repair

County Manger Renée Gray presented a Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Maine judicial Branch and Washington County Government. (See attached) The memo prepared by Director of Court Facilities Jeremy Gray documents the cost sharing associated with major repairs to the hydraulic cylinder in elevator #EL3291. The proposal from Kone for \$100,121.84 is for work to remove the existing leaking hydraulic cylinder and furnish and install a new hydraulic cylinder. The M.O.U. states the tenant share is 75% of the cost; \$75,091.38 will be reimbursed for the project to the County. The M.O.U. notes that reimbursement will not be processed prior to July 1, 2024 for fiscal considerations. Renée stated Kone will need \$50,000.00 as a down payment before work can begin. Renée noted the proposal from Kone does not include excavation and hazmat cleanup costs.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize the County Manager to execute the M.O.U. between the State of Maine Judicial Branch and the County of Washington for the repair of elevator #E3291 at a 25/75% cost sharing pertaining to all expenses. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

Renée noted she will keep the Commissioners informed about the cost of the hazmat cleanup as it becomes available.

AGENDA ITEM: Comment Period on Airport Runway Expansion

County Manager Renée Gray provided a letter from the Machias Water Company regarding expansion of the runway for the Town of Machias

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airport. The purpose of the letter is to point out the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention is not encouraging the location of

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the expansion due to the potential negative effects on the public water. The letter is attached. Josh Rolfe commented that he attended the selectboard meeting of May 8th. Josh reported the Town Manager of Machias stated the Machias Water Company may have provided premature notice and caused panic. Commissioner Gardner stated the County should stay out of local business and trust the residence of the town of Machias to make the best decision for themselves. There was no further discussion.

AGENDA ITEM: Award Bid for Installation of Waterline and Drain Pipe Repair at 24 Center Street

County Manager Renée Gray reported only one bid was received for an RFP that included two projects; to install a waterline for a sprinkler system at 24 Center Street and to repair a broken clay drainage pipe at the same location. The bid was received from Hanscom Construction, Inc. The bid for the installation of the fire protection line was \$29,190.00, and the bid for the drain repair was \$3,000.00. Renée contacted Donnie Hanscom and asked if he would consider a possible reduction on his bid amount. Mr. Hanscom lowered his bid for the fire protection line to \$22,250.00 plus an additional \$500.00 if repaving is needed. County Manager Renée Gray recommended the Commissioners accept the bid from Hanscom Construction. Chief Deputy Crabtree questioned why the sprinkler system was needed now when the building was used for public use before the County bought it. Commissioner Gardner argued that the State Marshall has not even come to inspect the building and should give more specifics for compliance. He suggested waiting for direction from the State Marshall before installing the sprinkler system. Commissioner Cassidy disagreed, stating sometimes you end up spending more by fighting then just complying. Renée noted that specs were sent to Maine Fire and the County has been given a permit for the renovations needed at 24 Center Street. Renée stated that installing the sprinkler system for fire safety is not just for the public but for the employees that work at the District Attorney's Office.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to award the bid to Hanscom Construction as presented. (Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)**

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Commissioner Gardner noted his approval to award the bid for the sprinkler system installation is given reluctantly.

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AGENDA ITEM: RCC Crisis Update

Deputy Director Josh Rolfe reported the RCC has hired one part-time person that is now in training. He stated there is a potential of one full-time employee retiring in July. Josh stated the call volume is up 26% and ambulance calls are up 25%. Commissioner Gardner recommended tabling the discussion as all three Commissioners should be present. Commissioner Cassidy pointed out this is a discussion that should take place with the Budget Advisory Committee; the BAC's input is needed. Commissioner Gardner stated that during the budget process for 2024 additional positions were discussed and decisions were made. Chief Deputy Crabtree stated it is not in the BAC's purview to tell you (Board of Commissioners) what to do with the funds approved for a budget year. Commissioner Gardner countered that it is within the Commissioners' purview and responsibility to maintain a working relationship with the BAC; to work with and for the tax-payers benefit. Commissioner Gardner stated the BAC are the tax-payers' representatives; therefore, an honest conversation should be had with the BAC regarding the use of approved funds. Josh Rolfe recommended the BAC be invited to the next Commissioners' meeting when all three board members are present. Commissioner Gardner stated management should approach the BAC then bring ideas to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Cassidy suggested a meeting with the BAC be held to get feedback. Josh Rolfe asked for approval to hire now to relieve the pressure until feedback is received by the BAC. Commissioner Gardner stated he was not comfortable with making any decisions. Chief Deputy Crabtree commiserated that this is what was done the previous year; requesting much needed help and waiting for an answer in the next budget year. Commissioner Gardner warned that the County needs to be careful to not overspend. Commissioner Cassidy stated if we hired two more ECS this year, we would still be over budget this year. Commissioner Gardner agreed and again stated he was not comfortable making any decision at this time. Sheriff Curtis state things are really ramping up. He noted there is pressure on our dispatch. Sheriff Curtis asked why should we wait for January when we know we have a problem now. Commissioner Gardner stated the public owns the business and the public must decide what they want to pay

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for. Sheriff Curtis stated he does not feel the public understands the crisis. Commissioner Gardner agreed stating the public has not seen the consequences of this crisis. The level of service can only be given with what funds are available. Commissioner Gardner stated he does not have the answer but believes that there must at least be a discussion with the BAC. Commissioner Cassidy concurred.

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Commissioner Cassidy reiterated the calls to RCC have increased due to the Maine State Police withdrawal. Commissioner Cassidy recommended there be a meeting with the BAC. Commissioner Gardner again stated the Commissioners should not be involved in the first meeting but management should arrange a meeting with the BAC. Renée noted she has had a meeting with Finance and RCC. Renée noted that for the 2024 budget preparation, Josh had requested four additional dispatcher positions; only two additional positions were approved. Renée asked if the Commissioners would like her to contact the BAC Chair and solicit a response from the committee. Commissioner Gardner responded the County Manager should proceed with what needs to happen; a meeting of the BAC will be scheduled.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Committee Update

County Manager Renée Gray noted the Construction Permit for the new safety building has been received. The projected completion date of the building is March of 2025.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner Issues and Comments

None.

MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to go into Executive Session. Commissioner Gardner seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 4:52 p.m.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

MOTION The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 5:45 p.m.
(Cassidy / Gardner, 2-0)

No decision.

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ADJOURNMENT

5:45 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.