

October 12, 2023

**Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Regular Meeting
held October 12, 2023
in the Probate Courtroom
Machias, Maine**

**Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner Christopher Gardner
Commissioner Vinton Cassidy
Commissioner John Crowley, Sr.
Renée Gray, County Manager
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Jill C. Holmes, Treasurer
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Joshua Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Michael Crabtree, Chief Deputy
Reid Albee, County Wide
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Regina Grabrovac, Heathy Acadia
Susan Sullivan, D.A.'s Office
Heather Green, Deeds
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Darlene Perry, Probate
Jill Holmes, Finance**

Executive Department business was called to order at 4:40 p.m.

**Approval of the minutes for the Public Hearing on the Proposed FY 2024
County Budget on September 7, 2023. (Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0)**

**Approval of the minutes for the Regular Commissioners' meeting held on
September 7, 2023. (Crowley / Cassidy, 2-0)**

AGENDA ITEM: Monthly and Quarterly Reports

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

County Manager Renée Gray reported Washington County received \$1000 from the MCCA Risk Pool for the 2022 Safe Driving Award.

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AGENDA ITEM: Payroll Change Notices

By consensus, the resignation of Lanie Perry as part-time ECS was accepted by the Commissioners with an effective date of 08/01/23. Lanie's resignation was accepted without prejudice.

Larry Hayward's resignation as part-time IT Consultant was accepted by consensus by the Commissioners with an effective date of 09/29/23. The Board of Commissioners wished Larry well on his retirement.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Cody Eaton as full-time Corrections Officer effective 10/01/23.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Natalia Anderson as full-time Patrol Deputy effective 10/01/23.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

In the absence of the Sheriff and Chief Deputy, Paula Johnson-Rolfe reported Patrol Deputy Anderson is fully academy trained and comes from the State Police. Paula stated this fills all Patrol Deputy positions at this time.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to hire Jeffrey Erickson as part-time IT Consultant effective 10/04/23.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to hire William McCall as part-time IT Consultant effective 10/04/23.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner asked for clarity in the position structure for the IT Consultants. He asked who would be the direct supervisor of the two new hires; they are part-time county employees but working with the IT Consultant Dennis Dorsey who is hired as outside contractor. Paula Johnson-Rolfe explained the part-time IT Consultants, Jeffrey and William, are hired as county employees and will be paid wages split three ways between the budget lines of the Sheriff, Jail and RCC. County Manager Renée Gray stated the part-time IT Consultants have been helping in other departments when needed if they are available. Renée stated there is a proposal in the 2024 budget to hire an IT Consultant for other departments within the

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county.

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MOTION Commissioner Cassidy moved to reclassify Kyla Townsend from full-time to part-time Corrections Officer effective 10/04/23. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Signatures on Six-Month Certificates

None.

AGENDA ITEM: Award Vehicle Bid for Sheriff's Office

Sheriff Barry Curtis submitted a written request for authorization to purchase another patrol cruiser in the amount of \$42,154.00. The request explained the reason for the request is due to the recent addition of a full-time patrol deputy position. The Sheriff noted there is sufficient funding in the Sheriff's Office budget line to support this purchase. Commissioner Gardner stated that the previous request for the purchase of three new patrol cruisers included a conversation regarding trading in three old cruisers or retaining them. The previous purchase of three new patrol cruisers was approved with the recommendation by Commissioner Gardner to consider retaining the old cruisers. Paula Johnson-Rolfe state the Sheriff took his recommendation and retained the vehicles. Paula noted the new hire is now using one of the reserve vehicles.

MOTION Commissioner Crowley moved to authorize the purchase of another patrol cruiser as presented. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)

AGENDA ITEM: Award Roof and Gutter Repair RFP

County Manager Renée Gray stated there were no bids received for the RFP to repair the Jail Metal Roof. She reported that she contacted 10 contractors around the state, and has a contractor coming on Monday, October 16th to look at the job.

AGENDA ITEM: Board Appointments

The 2023 Committee and Board Appointments were reviewed. Previous County Manager Betsy Fitzgerald served on three of the boards. It was recommended that County Manager Renée Gray should replace Betsy on all

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the boards she was serving on.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to update the 2023 Committee and Board Appointments by replacing Betsy Fitzgerald with County Manager Renée Gray. (Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

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The updated 2023 list of committee and board appointments is attached.

Commissioner Gardner stated it was important to have County representation on the LUPC board. Betsy Fitzgerald currently serves on that board. By consensus, the Commissioners directed County Manager Renée Gray to investigate board appointments for LUPC with the intention of transitioning Renée to the board representing Washington County.

AGENDA ITEM: Downeast Restorative Harvest Garden Update

Regina Grabrovac of Healthy Acadia was present to give the Board of Commissioners an update on the Restorative Harvest Community Garden. Regina summarized the progress since her last update in early spring. Power has been installed gratis by Versant Power. Maine Department of Corrections has done a lot of ground work: grading, tilling, mowing and covering crop with hay. There are seventeen 100 ft. beds prepared and ready to be used in the Spring. A greenhouse has been built on the property. The lot has been cleaned and cleared of old fencing and logs. The Garden Party to showcase the community garden went very well with approximately 80 attendees. Regina stated a well will be drilled in the fall. Commissioner Gardner stated it is good to hear the property is being put to good use. This county owned property is on 73 Broadway adjacent to Versant Power.

AGENDA ITEM: Building Update

County Manager Renée Gray submitted a written report. She reported that there has been a lot of progress. Axiom has installed wiring for internet. Extra shelving for filing has been installed and the D.A.'s staff feel it will give them sufficient space. Renée met with the D.A. staff and currently a mid-November move date is anticipated. Commissioner Gardner asked if space to grow has been considered. Paige Bebus and Susan Sullivan both stated space to expand should not be a problem. Commissioner Gardner requested that the D.A.'s Office keep ahead of the need to expand and keep the Commissioners apprised of the situation. It was noted that should the D.A.'s Office need to expand their space, there is potential to build on the RCC side of the

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Talbot building. Commissioner Gardner asked if there was plenty of room for storage. Susan Sullivan responded there is plenty of room for years' worth of files.

Renée reported there has been Construction Team Meetings every Thursday. She stated there is an Office Relocation Plan.

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Renée reviewed the relocation plan.

- Unorganized Territories Supervisor Dean Preston is in favor of moving his office space to the vacated Sheriff's Office space. Dean could potentially bring funding opportunities for projects such as paving the parking area in front of the jail for public use.
- EMA Director Lisa Hanscom is interested in moving her office space into the former U.T. Office. Commissioner Gardner asked if there are any plans for occupying the Extension Building. Renée stated there are some offices being used right now but the plan is to eliminate the building once EMA has moved their working space. Renée stated Lisa plans to apply for MEMA funds to tear down the old extension building and replace it with a much smaller, more efficient addition for required EMA needs. Renée noted operation costs for the Extension building has already been budgeted for under Buildings and Grounds.
- RCC will acquire the spaces in the RCC building that will be vacated by the detectives.
- Jail Administrator Rich Rolfe will have an office space in the new Safety building. Corrections Officer offices will then be moved to the 2nd floor of the old Sheriff's building. Access to the office space from the jail will be made possible by breaking through an old access. Commissioner Gardner asked if having that access is acceptable under Department of Corrections. Rich Rolfe stated he will check with DOC.

Renée stated everyone is content with the relocation plan as well as the newest safety building floor plans.

Renée presented a proposal from S.W. Cole Engineering, Inc. The proposal is for Exploration and Geotechnical Engineering Services. The purpose of the services is to obtain subsurface information in order to provide geotechnical recommendations for foundations and earthwork associated with the proposed construction site. The proposal is for a total of \$9,800.00. Commissioner Gardner stated this is

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standard operation for a new build.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize County Manager Renée Gray to execute the proposal for engineering services by S.W. Cole Engineering, Inc. as presented.
(Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)**

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Renée stated she contacted three separate vendors to provide a proposal to install heat pumps in the Probate Courtroom, Probate Office and Administrative Offices for a more efficient heating and cooling option. The three proposals received were:

- Border Electric Inc. of Calais, Maine
- Dave's World of Ellsworth, Maine
- Black's Heat Pumps of Glenburn, Maine

Renée reported there is still one more contractor from Calais that has not submitted a proposal, therefore, the quotes are not being released at this point. Renée stated that if the final quote is not received, she would recommend Border Electric Inc. as apparent low bidder.

***MOTION* Commissioner Crowley moved to authorize the County Manager to seek, secure and execute awarding of the bid for the installation of heat pumps to the apparent low bidder.
(Crowley / Cassidy, 3-0)**

Commissioner Gardner stated Renée should wait a reasonable timeframe for the final bid before the final award of the bid. It was noted for full transparency that the funds for heat pump installations are already in the budget under Buildings and Grounds for this project.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner's Issues

County Manager Renée Gray presented the Commissioners with information regarding a USDA proposed project. The project involves establishing a \$1,000,000.00 revolving loan fund with Northern Maine Development Commission to promote economic development through lending for business facility or community development projects in Aroostook, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Washington Counties. Renée stated there is a thirty-day open comment period. Commissioner Gardner stated he had no comments.

***MOTION* Commissioner Cassidy moved to authorize the County Manager to sign the document confirming the Board of Commissioners**

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have read the project description and have no comments regarding the proposed project. (Cassidy / Crowley, 3-0)

Commissioner Gardner stated he wanted to make it clear that the article regarding the discussion of MCCA pushing back on the loss of rural patrol coverage by the State Police was on behalf of the whole Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Gardner noted the article inferred that it was a concern of his alone and not the entire board.

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Commissioner Gardner stated the decision to pull rural coverage in Washington County is not on the shoulders of the State Troopers or the Patrol Deputies but on the State of Maine. He stated the Board of Commissioners are resolute in their decision to take the issue to the legislature. The Commissioners plan to work with the Maine State Police and the Maine State Sheriff's Association to be sure the tax burden does not fall on the tax payers. Commissioner Gardner stated there will be a Public Hearing on Monday, October 16th to discuss the large increase in the Washington County budget. The largest increase due to the addition of Patrol Deputies to cover rural areas that will no longer be covered by the State Police. Commissioner Gardner noted he hopes the public will turn out and give their input as to how to solve this issue. Commissioner Gardner did note that it was discussed at the last MCCA meeting that other counties are facing the same issue in rural Maine.

AGENDA ITEM: Commissioner's Issues

ADJOURNMENT

5:30 p.m.

ATTEST:

Carla J.R. Manchester, Admin. Asst.

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