September 2, 2026

Minutes of the Washington County Commissioners'
Special Meeting
held September 2, 2026
in the Washington County Commissioners' Office
Machias, Maine

Attending the meeting were:
Commissioner David Burns
Commissioner Billy Howard
Renée Gray, County Administrator
Carla Manchester, Administrative Assistant
Will Tuell, MVNO
Grace Falzarano, Finance
Sondra Small, Finance
Josh Rolfe, RCC / WCSO
Tammy Gay, Deeds
Tony Santiago, Columbia Falls
Paula Johnson-Rolfe, WCSO
Leigh MacKeen, Whitneyville
Jon Pottle, Katahdin Law
Brian Schuth, Eastport
Rich Rolfe, WCSO
Lisa M. Hanscom, EMA
Ben Edwards

Commissioner Courtney Hammond was not present.

Commissioner Burns called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

Commissioner Burns stated that due to the recent lawsuit against the county there is currently the need for a reorganization of operational structure. He noted it is important to understand what everyone's responsibilities are; to be sure the County is following Maine Law and county policy. Commissioner Burns stated he has invited Attorney Jon Pottle of Katahdin Law to discuss these needs. Commissioner Burns recommends the County request Attorney Pottle to consider being engaged by the County to work through the process of restructuring. Commissioner Burns noted the County has begun the process of building the budget and stated it is extremely important that this process is done in an orderly and accurate fashion. Commissioner Burns stated he reached out to Attorney Pottle due to the dissention and disagreement that must be worked out in order to carry out the County's responsibilities. Commissioner Burns introduced Attorney Jon Pottle

and asked him to tell a little about himself. Commissioner Burns stated he will ask for an action by the Board of Commissioners to hire Attorney Pottle to act as General Counsel for the County. Attorney Jonathan Pottle reiterated that he has been invited to meet with the Commissioners to discuss the important need of the County to have General Counsel. He noted county business does not stop and the logistics of the operations must be navigated. The objective of his work as General Counsel will be to complete county business with guardrails. Attorney Pottle gave a brief history of his personal history; he has practiced law in Bangor for approximately 16 to 18 years. He has worked for Eaton Peabody which is now known as Katahdin Law. Attorney Pottle stated he represents many public clients as well as private and non-profit sectors. He stated helping the County navigate the current situation will be challenging and stated he will be objective while providing the County with advice and guidance. Attorney Pottle noted that if the Commissioners decide to engage him, he will plan on meeting with all office staff to get up to speed. He stated the facts and circumstances matter. Commissioner Burns opened the floor to the public for questions and concerns. Ben Edwards stated he is currently the Vice Chair for the Budget Advisory Committee. He stated he submitted a letter to the Commissioners regarding his concerns about the county offices inability to function properly as of recently. He stated he is speaking for himself; not on behalf of the BAC. Ben stated he recognizes obtaining General Counsel is a critical first step in the process of restructuring. He noted he supports the recommendation of Commissioner Burns without reservation. Ben acknowledged funding to obtain general counsel will use funds beyond what has been budgeted for but is in support anyway. Brian Schuth, Chair of the BAC but also speaking for himself and not on behalf of the BAC, agreed with Ben that obtaining general counsel is absolutely necessary. Will Tuell questioned how much will these services cost and where the funds will come from. Commissioner Burns responded that those are good questions and asked Attorney Pottle if there are parameters. Attorney Pottle commented it is difficult so say at this point. He will need an opportunity to familiarize himself with the situation. He noted he does charges on an hourly basis and does give discounts for public entities. He also noted we does not plan to abandon the County should he be hired, but will work with the County regarding payment. Commissioner Burns stated there are some undesignated funds available to pay for the services.

***MOTION* Commissioner Burns moved to engage the Services of**

Attorney Jonathan Pottle for the purpose of General Counsel. (Burns / Howard, 2-0-1)

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MOTION **Commissioner Howard moved to go into Executive Session pursuant to Title MRSA § 405 (6)(E) to consult with legal counsel regarding the Commissioners' rights and duties. Commissioner Burns seconded the motion which passed 2-0. It was 1:56 p.m.**

MOTION **The Commissioners declared themselves to have closed the Executive Session. It was 2:55 p.m. (Howard / Burns, 2-0)**

No action.

Before the meeting was adjourned, County Administrator Renée Gray asked if the Commissioners had anything they would like to add to the agenda for next weeks' meeting. Commissioner Howard asked to have two items added to the agenda; 1) Discussion of Freezing the Overtime for the Sheriff's Office, and 2) Discussion of payment on the TAN.

ADJOURNMENT
2:56 p.m.

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