

**SAGADAHOC COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JULY 13, 2021**

A regular meeting of the Sagadahoc County Commissioners was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 13, 2021 at the Commissioners' Meeting Room, 752 High Street, Bath, Maine.

Present: Commissioners Charles Crosby III, Brian Hobart and Carole Grose, Administrator William Post, Sheriff Joel Merry, Chief Deputy Brett Strout, EMA Director Sarah Bennett, Deputy EMA Director Grainne Shaw, Communications Interim Director Mike Carter, Facilities Manager Aaron Hanscom, District Attorney's Office Manager Shaundra Vanella and Kennebec County EMA Director Sean Goodwin.

I. Call Meeting to Order – Chair Crosby called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

II. Special Presentation of Certified Emergency Manager – Maine

Kennebec County EMA Director Sean Goodwin was introduced by Administrator Post. Mr. Goodwin stated that the Emergency Manager – Maine certification process is not an easy task. Sarah Bennett has worked over the last several years to attend trainings and fulfill the requirements and has done so. Mr. Goodwin presented Sarah Bennett with a certificate and pin.

The Commissioners congratulated Sarah Bennett for her certification.

III. Public Comments – None

IV. Amendments to the Agenda

Administrator Post stated that Action Item g “Act on MMA Workers’ Compensation Incentive Program” could be deleted from the agenda as the County already participates and the paperwork is complete with MMA.

V. Consent Agenda

- a. Meeting Minutes of June 8, 2021
- b. June Financial Statements
- c. Written Department Reports
- d. Accounts Payable and Payroll Warrants

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and second by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to approve the consent agenda as presented.

VI. Department Reports

a. Sheriff's Department and TBRJ – Sheriff Merry

Sheriff Merry reported that the month of June saw an increase in activity with over 500 calls.

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Sheriff Merry asked the Commissioners of the written information he provides is still desired and useful. All Commissioners commented that the written information provided by the Sheriff is useful.

Sheriff Merry stated that the population at Two Bridges Regional Jail (TBRJ) has increased which coincides with the overall activity from his officers and the backlog in the court system. He stated that as of that day, TBRJ has 90 inmates, including borders from Oxford County, six from Penobscot County and four from Knox County. The Sheriff also stated that TBRJ is negotiating with Knox County to board 20 or 30 inmates and Knox would provide staff so that TBRJ could open another pod. This would allow for additional boarders from Penobscot County.

Commissioner Crosby asked about vaccination rates at the jail. Sheriff Merry stated that he estimates that 75% of the staff are vaccinated, and the inmates are offered the vaccination upon entry. Masks are mandated to be worn inside the secure perimeter.

b. County Administrator

In addition to the written report provided, Administrator Post stated that he had a lengthy meeting with TBRJ Administrator Bailey to review the jail's status. The Administrator also has attended a Jail Authority meeting and met briefly with the Jail Authority Board Chair.

The Administrator stated that the County's labor attorney, Linda McGill is moving to "of counsel" status with Bernstein Shur and will no longer be handling new matters. Matt Tarasevich of Bernstein Shur will be the attorney handling human resource legal matters for the county.

VII. Action Items

a. Act on Purchase of Transport Vehicle

Sheriff Merry stated that this purchase involves acquiring an unmarked vehicle to be used by the programs deputy. Currently the programs deputy uses a personal vehicle and a gas card provided by the county. This practice raises questions about liability. In addition, an unmarked vehicle would allow for anonymity for transporting individuals to treatment facilities.

Administrator Post stated that funding for this vehicle would be from the Corrections Fund which has a balance of approximately \$620,000.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hobart and seconded by Commissioner Crosby to approve of the purchase of a 2020 Ford Police Interceptor from Quirk Auto for \$33,812 with funding from the Corrections Reserve Account.

Commissioner Grose asked if a sport-utility vehicle is needed if a sedan could be used. Sheriff Merry stated that a request for proposals was distributed that requested pricing for a new or used sedan, SUV, or van and only one proposal was received for the SUV from Quirk Auto.

Vote on the motion to approve the purchase: 2 – 1, Commissioner Grose opposed.

b. Act on Authorization to Hire Three Dispatchers

Administrator Post stated he is requesting authorization to hire three dispatchers for the Communications Center.

Communications Interim Director Carter stated that with these hires, the Communications Center will be fully staffed for line dispatchers for the first time since 2006.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and second by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to authorize the hiring of Andrew Naum, Bradley Smith, and Katelyn Staples as full-time dispatchers for the Communications Center.

c. Act on Authorization to Promote Interim Communications Director to Permanent Director

Administrator Post requested that the Board authorize the promotion of Michael Carter to Communications Director. He previously served as the Deputy Director, a supervisor, and a dispatcher for Sagadahoc County. Since serving as Interim Director there has been a notable change in the morale of the Communications Center employees, and he has proven that he is more than capable of handling the position. He stated that He has his full support.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart, seconded by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to approve appointing Michael Carter Communications Director.

d. Act on Authorization to Hire Part-time IT Technician

The Administrator stated that he received one applicant for the newly created part-time IT Technician position. Mike Dean provides a wealth of experience in IT and 13 years at the county level. He stated that he has personally known Mike for over 15 years and believes that he will be a tremendous asset to the county.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart, seconded by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to authorize the hiring of Michael Dean for the part-time IT position.

e. Act on Approval of Part-time Administrative Assistant Job Description

The Administrator stated that because the full-time administrative assistant position in the Administration Offices is now part-time, Human Resources Manager Amber Jones and he created a new job description for this part-time position. He requested the Commissioners approve this new job description.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and second by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to approve the job description for the part-time Administrative Assistant to the County Administrator as presented.

f. Act on Personnel Policy Amendment – Section 7.4 – Deferred Compensation

Administrator Post stated that an issue was encountered with this section of the Personnel Policy with the employees that have retired from the MEPERS system and are still employed by the County and wish to participate in the deferred compensation plan. He then turned discussion over to HR Manager Jones.

Jones stated that the MEPERS retired employees have a 5% penalty paid to MEPERS for continuing to work. This is interpreted in the current Personnel Policy to be “contributing” to MEPERS and makes these employees ineligible for the deferred compensation plan. An amendment was developed to the Personnel Policy to correct this problem and to treat the employees fairly. This amendment allows the employees to participate in the county’s other retirement plans while retired from the MEPERS. This solution will also need to be applied to the collective bargaining unit agreements.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and second by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3- 0 to approve the Personnel Policy amendment to Section 7.4 – Deferred Compensation as presented.

g. Act on Municipal Tax Warrant and Interest Rate

Administrator Post stated that the County’s 2022 Tax Assessment, which reflects the amount included in the recently adopted FY 2021-22 budget needs to be approved by the Commissioners. After approval, the individual warrants will be sent to the municipalities on or before July 15, with a September 1 due date, with interest accruing as of November 1. It is also necessary to adopt an interest rate for delinquent payments and the rate may not exceed that established by the State Treasurer, which is 6%.

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and second by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to approve the Municipal Tax Warrant and set the delinquent tax interest rate at 6%.

h. Reschedule August 10, 2021 Commissioners’ Meeting

Administrator Post stated that he serves on the Board for the Maine Town, City and County Management Association (MTCMA). Each August, the MTCMA holds a three-day training event (this year August 11-13). In conjunction with this event, a regular MTCMA Board meeting is held. The meeting this year is on August 10 at 2:00 p.m. in Carrabassett Valley which conflicts with the Commissioners’ regular meeting. Therefore, he requested that the Commissioners reschedule the August 10 meeting.

After discussion, the Board rescheduled the August 10, 2021 Commissioners’ Meeting to August 17, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.

VIII. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. DA Irving’s request to Assist Lincoln County Office

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Administrator Post stated that District Attorney Natasha Irving is requesting that Sagadahoc County employees in her office be allowed to assist in her office in Lincoln County as that office is severely understaffed.

DA Office Manager Shaundra Vanella stated that the assistance would be greatly appreciated, and she would ensure that invoices would be sent weekly for Sagadahoc to be reimbursed promptly by Lincoln County. The Lincoln County office is down two members currently.

Administrator Post stated that there was a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the two counties.

Commissioner Gorse asked about the workload at Sagadahoc County. Vanella stated that the staff has caught up on work in Sagadahoc and that there would only be a couple of days per week.

The Commissioners approved assisting Lincoln County's District Attorney Office with Sagadahoc County employees.

b. Courthouse Roof Project

Administrator Post stated that the bid specifications are expected to be submitted to the County for review in approximately two weeks. The Administrator has received the new contract for engineering services from Trillium Engineering which is Eric Dube's new company. The contract is for the remainder of the project including bidding the project, reviewing bids and construction administration of the project for a cost of \$15,230.

c. ARPA Funding Requests and Decision Process

The Administrator recommended that all requests for funding for projects utilizing the ARPA funds be forwarded to him. Once received, he will acknowledge the request and maintain a file and listing of submitted requests. This will allow the county to have the requests in one location, organized and ready for review when the time is appropriate to do so.

He also stated that the first question that needs to be answered about the use of the ARPA funds is if whether they can be used for the Communications Project or not. If they can, a significant portion of the funding will be dedicated to that project which will benefit the entire county. The answer to this question will shape what the use of the funds will be. He stated that he expects there will be several discussions on this topic, as the County continues to receive guidance from the U.S. Department of Treasury, NACO and other sources on how the county can use the ARPA funding.

The Commissioners discussed broadband as one of the potential identified uses of the ARPA funds and stated that whatever the projects are that are selected, it is important that the projects benefit as many county residents as possible.

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IX. Commissioner's Comments

a. Workforce Investment

Commissioner Crosby stated that there was nothing to report on this topic.

b. MCCA

Commissioner Hobart stated that the MCCA expects to hold a large meeting in September to discuss the different projects under consideration using ARPA funds by the Maine counties. This meeting will be in person and most likely at the Senator in Augusta.

X. ADJOURN

On motion of Commissioner Hobart and seconded by Commissioner Grose, the Board voted 3 – 0 to adjourn the meeting at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



William S. Post
County Administrator