

**WALDO COUNTY 2016 BUDGET COMMITTEE
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
OCTOBER 23, 2015
Maine District Courthouse – 103 Church Street, Belfast**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members, Bill Sneed, Peter Curley, Richard Desmarais, Penny Sampson and Arthur Durity. Also present were County Commissioners William D. Shorey, Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau and Deputy County Clerk Marilyn Saucier to take minutes.

Call to order: Commissioner Shorey called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M. and all present made introductions.

NOMINATIONS FOR 2016 BUDGET COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

****R. Desmarais moved, Peter Curley seconded to nominate Bill Sneed as FY2016 Waldo County Budget Committee Chairman.**

B. Sneed nominated Harry Dean Potter.

Nominations closed.

****Motion for Bill Sneed to serve as chairman was passed by four (4) with an abstention by Bill Sneed.**

2016 BUDGET DISCUSSION:

B. Sneed provided an overview of the budget process, and showed the new members how to review the appropriations and revenue sheets, etc.

W. Shorey pointed out that this group of Commissioners has had a good track record of staying under the LD 1 Cap and has managed to increase its net worth by \$1,000,000.00. The County is under excellent management

B. Sneed further explained that there will be, at the end of the budget process, a public hearing for the public to come and speak or ask questions if they wish. If the Budget Committee approves a budget higher than the LD 1 Tax Cap, the Commissioners and Budget Committee would have to hold a joint meeting immediately following the public hearing. This won't be necessary this year as the budget is already way below the cap.

There was brief discussion about when to have future meetings.

Departments the Budget Committee requested to meet with:

Emergency Management
District Attorneys
Commissioners
Treasurer

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Facilities
Sheriff
Communications Center
Deeds
Probate, including Judge Longley

If any other department or agency chooses to attend to speak to or defend their budget request, they will be permitted to speak.

A. Fowler noted that Department 2025, Employee Benefits is down this year because the health insurance costs have been reduced again this year. The County, at the request of the Budget Committee back in 2007, created a health insurance research committee that included department heads, insurance companies, etc. and developed a self-funded health insurance plan.

*B. Sneed requested that the Commissioners break out the 4015 Professional Services lines to show the amounts.

Discussion of the Jail:

W. Shorey explained that when the state returned the jails to the counties, the calculations of the “prisoner days” reflected the number of inmates originating with each county. This money funds the community corrections and the Waldo County Garden is funding by this account. This year the garden produced 31.5 tons of vegetables. This year the crew was particularly good. This is a great county project and the funding from the State is very helpful. With some efficiencies, the garden is anticipated to increase to 80,000 lbs. of produce in 2016.

P. Sampson explained that it was her brother donated the compost from Hawk Ridge and Penny herself made a donation of seeds through.

W. Shorey thanked P. Sampson for her donation and also mentioned that there is a gentleman who donates the services of his honeybees.

B. Johnson mentioned that there would also be fruit harvested next year. W. Shorey thanked her for reminding him of this. He commented that the three pear trees produced beautiful pears this summer and they all disappeared because crows carried them all of.

A. Durity asked where the produce goes and was told that various food cupboards, churches, the Game Loft in Belfast the Waldo County YMCA, and all told, there were over 20 locations. This also included other area jails on rare occasion. It was noted that Waldo County also uses the produce to teach the clients at the Maine Coast Regional Reentry Center how to grow, harvest and preserve the vegetables as part of the rehabilitation program.

P. Curley said that he recently saw a report on jails and gardens and Waldo County’s garden was highlighted.

Penny Sampson asked for an explanation of the 1080 Advertising and Promotion Line. B. Arseneau explained that she did not know the origin of that line item’s name, noting that the

Counties used to go before the state legislature with their budget requests, but when the counties went by statute to their own budget process, the budget line items continued as they had been. Advertising and promotion related to outside agencies that had some connection with the County. For example, Waldo Community Actions Partners used to be housed in one of the County's buildings and when the County expanded and needed the space, the county provided a subsidy for the space that WCAP moved into.

The Firefighters Association budget request was briefly discussed, as well as some of the new programs that were funded by the County such as "I Am Responding."

There was brief discussion about the possibility of building credits for retirement for volunteer firemen. It was noted that there is no statewide system so if a person leaves one agency and goes to another fire agency, their credits do not go with them.

A Durity asked if any of the other towns have tried to address the risk rating in their towns. Insurance companies use independent rating systems. 10 is the highest risk, and is reserved for the islands. If the rating is high, homeowners pay a higher fire insurance. There are some ways for towns to work together to reduce their individual fire rates. A. Fowler suggested that the selectmen speak to the President of the Firefighters Association about this, as he may be knowledgeable on this topic.

A Durity said most Maine towns come in at #9, but some have been able to do things to reduce the rating, resulting in cost savings to the homeowners within those towns.

The next meeting will be an **all-day meeting Saturday, November 14, 2015** in the Maine District Courthouse starting at 9:00 a.m.

****B. Sneed moved, P. Curley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by *Barbara L. Arseneau*
Waldo County Clerk