

**WALDO COUNTY 2018 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING
NOVEMBER 17, 2017
Maine District Courtroom
103 Church Street, Belfast, Maine
6:00 p.m.**

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Richard Desmarais, Herb Harnden, Penny Sampson, Peter Rioux, Peter Curley, Cheryl York, Josh Gerritsen, and Gabriel Pendleton. Also present were County Commissioners William D. Shorey, Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson, and both County Clerk Barbara Arseneau and Assistant Clerk Lynn Patten to take minutes.

Call to order: Chairman Richard Desmarais called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.; Commissioner Fowler led in the flag salute followed by introductions of all those present.

P. Rioux moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the minutes from the October 27, 2017 Budget Committee meeting. Unanimous.

Chairman Richard Desmarais explained that this was the time for the Committee to go through each department's budget requests since most of the department heads would be present, and if some figures stand out, this would be the time to ask questions. After that, if a committee member felt that some areas are still too high and feel it should be reduced, the member could make a motion requesting to have the budget line reduced by whatever amount they felt was appropriate.

REGISTRY OF PROBATE BUDGET - 1070:

Present was Register of Probate Sharon Peavey. P. Rioux asked what the Court appointment line is and S. Peavey explained that the Court is required to appoint Counsel for those who cannot afford it, so funding for that comes from this line. The Judge has instituted a Restitution program, so they are able to get some money back to assist in offsetting that cost.

****H. Harnden moved, P. Rioux seconded to approve Registry of Probate's budget as presented at \$243,270.00. Unanimous.**

REGISTRY OF DEEDS BUDGET - 1065:

Present was Register of Deeds Stacy Grant. R. Desmarais reminded the Committee Members that the Budget Committee does not touch personnel lines and that was the only increase he could see in this budget.

****G. Pendleton moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve Registry of Deed's budget as presented at \$234,958.00. Unanimous.**

TREASURER'S BUDGET – 1025:

Present was Treasurer David Parkman and Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell. No changes were made to the budget.

****P. Curley moved, H. Harnden seconded to approve the Treasurer's budget as presented at \$79,379.00. Unanimous.**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S BUDGET – 1015:

Present was District Attorney Jonathan Liberman. P. Rioux asked what the Metro /D.A. Central line consists of. J. Liberman explained that this line includes costs associated with broadband and messenger software for Metro access, which is a software the D.A.'s office uses to check someone's background history. It also includes the server centralization system with Augusta to save the County money on server replacements, etc.

R. Desmarais questioned Witness Fees versus District Court Witness Fees. J. Liberman explained that as a result of the courts being unified, the District Court Witness Fees line is no longer used and has been zero for the last few years, so it can be eliminated. The Witness Fees are always case driven from one year to the next. Some cases may involve out-of-state witnesses, including professional lab "experts" that have to be reimbursed for travel, etc. Some years the case load can be low, but another year, it can be demanding and costs can add up very quickly. R. Desmarais asked if the \$2,500.00 in that line could be reduced by \$1,000.00. J. Liberman requested that it not be reduced because it was their best estimate for what is safe to have in that line, in case a big case comes up.

J. Liberman explained that contractual services were lower by \$635.00 and commodities were up by \$1,000.00, with a net increase of \$365.00. The biggest reason for the commodities increase is new Court rules that mandates the D.A.'s office to provide Discovery in hand to every Defendant at initial appearance, rather than waiting until a plea has been entered. The cost in doing so will increase considerably. The other increase is to compensate the A.D.A's for the use of their personal cell phones. They no longer have County cell phones for working purposes; however they still get after-hours calls from law enforcement and work emails while in court, need to make calls, etc., and now they have to use their personal cells quite a bit for work. Therefore, they are requesting some reimbursement for their personal cell phone use.

****P. Rioux moved, G. Pendleton seconded to approve District Attorney's budget as presented. J. Gerritsen moved to amend motion to include the removal of the District Court Witnesses line and P. Curley seconded to amend the motion. Unanimous.**

****P. Rioux withdrew his motion; G. Pendleton withdrew his second.**

****P. Rioux moved, G. Pendleton seconded to accept the District Attorney's budget as amended at \$265,977.00. Unanimous.**

WALDO COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERS BUDGET – 1080-4715:

Present was Keith Small, who submitted a printout for all present. Waldo Community Action Partners has been serving Waldo County for over 52 years. Help is provided primarily for low income citizens in Waldo County in the form of housing, fuel assistance, home improvements, Thanksgiving baskets, and a number of different services described in the handout. They have requested \$3,500.00 for a number of years; this came about when the County, who originally provided free space for the transportation office, stopped providing that space. The County continued to provide in the way of monies.

P. Sampson asked what “Connect Kids to Coverage” is. K. Small explained that it is a program that helps low-income kids and families connect to health insurances other than what is part of the Affordable Care Act.

P. Rioux asked if the dollar value of services on the handout is actually what has been spent or if it is the “value” placed on the services. K. Small responded that these are actual dollar amounts for the services people receive, direct cost of the services, and indirect cost of the assistance received from staff.

P. Sampson asked if there are circumstances in which a person may need to pay for the ride from the Waldo County Transportation and are there instances where they get reimbursed. K. Small said that in some cases, that is true. Those who have Maine Care and are traveling to doctors’ appointments, etc. don’t have to pay. Those using it as public transportation pay a minimal fare that varies depending on the destination. To travel further away, such as Bangor, there is a larger fee. Fees are also assessed if someone doesn’t fall into a specific category but needs a ride; then there is a special formula that goes into determining of the cost to the rider.

P. Sampson asked if riders are assessed a fee, are those miles figured into the dollar value of WCAP’s services? K. Small responded that this was probable, but he was not exactly sure; it is a very, very small population. That would be revenue and the dollar value on the services is expenses.

****P. Rioux moved, P. Curley seconded to approve funding the WCAP budget at \$3,500.00 as presented. Passed by seven; P. Sampson opposed.**

P. Rioux asked if the Commissioners ever disagree on the votes taken and were told yes, that they do. Some examples were cited.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION BUDGET – 2005:

Rick Kersbergen was present and explained that the \$655.00 increase was largely for staffing.

P. Sampson asked what the Extension actually does. R. Kersbergen explained that it was a unique organization, the cooperative is big part of that, and it has been around since 1865. Over the years the mission has changed somewhat. In the last few years, the focus has been on food systems and youth development; 4-H programs are the traditional youth program. They are also doing a lot with stem education through the University system. Food systems is anything from food safety, to production, to marketing, and business development. They are doing a lot more with business development now with a number of new and developing farms throughout the County and State. The Extension has three sources of funding; one is the County, and that basically supports the function of the County office. The office is located by the Vocational School, the County owns the building, and the School owns the land. County Facilities Management helps take care of the building. The budget reflects just the operating and staffing expenses for this office. State and Federal funding pay for R. Kersbergen’s salary. He introduced Ann Rothrock as the Treasurer, who is part of an executive committee and manages the County funds. The committee is a local group that is represented by a number of towns that help direct the programs. The Extension works with home-schooled students as well.

P. Sampson stated that she had grown up on a dairy farm then the dairy farms went away for the most part. Now there is resurgence of farming. She asked if U-Extension is more needed again. R. Kersbergen explained that Waldo County is still producing the same amount of milk as it did 30 years ago, only with much fewer farms that have cows producing a lot more milk. The advice that they now provide is a more technical-level. There are a lot of new farms springing up that sell directly to consumers, so the education is more on how to start a small business. There are also farms that are running multi-million dollar operations, so it is very diverse.

****P. Rioux moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Waldo County budget as presented at \$42,740.00. Unanimous.**

WALDO COUNTY SOIL & WATER BUDGET – 2035:

Present was Kym Sanderson, who submitted a handout. K. Sanderson explained that the Soil and Water District is housed in the same building along with U.S.D.A. and has always done so. They have partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, which is a Federal agency. The districts were the grassroots which bridged the gap between farmers and the federal government. It is now run by a board of local people, not just farmers anymore, and has been branching out over the last 10-15 years. They focus on rural conservation; not only working with dairy but with a lot of organic farmers. W.C.S.W.D. helps them get through the door and get the grant money that the U.S.D.A. has to offer. W.C.S.W.D. also finds that natural resources conservation needs a lot of education all over and they have developed programs. They go into the school systems and teach about soil and water; such as soil erosion and water quality, how to keep the water clean, what happens when it is not clean, etc. They work with elementary and high school children. There is a State program called the Enviro-thon program, which is a high school competition that is sponsored by W.C.S.W.D. There are about 60 high schools that participate and some go onto the state and international level.

K. Sanderson explained that she is now semi-retired so they hired a person to do some more teaching about invasive insects and other species, how to keep pollutants from going into the lakes, and ponds etc. They have partnered with the Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.), Lake Associations, Belfast Bay Watershed, and a lot of Land Trusts in the area etc. When resources are combined, a lot more work can be accomplished with a lot less money. When this position was split, she helped get the website going, get on Facebook, etc. Grant money is received from various organizations and also Federal Grant money through D.E.P., to do a lot of these projects. Whatever money they don't get themselves, W.C.S.W.D. partners with other organizations that receive grant money. The District has a tree and trout sale each year, when they sell all kinds of shrubbery and fruit trees along with trout. They try to buy as much as possible locally rather than from out of state. They are not making as much money as they used to, but it helps the local growers. There is a lot of outreach and people really like that.

****P. Curley moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Waldo County Soil & Water District budget as presented at \$26,000.00. Unanimous.**

SHERIFF'S BUDGET 1075 AND JAIL BUDGET 1050:

Present was Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton. Last year there were 8,300 calls for service in the Patrol Division and they are on track to match or exceed that this year. Regarding the Corrections

Division, they have worked hard with Commissioner Shorey to negotiate a new contract with Two Bridges Regional Jail, and the Jail Administrator has done an excellent job keeping the inmate population down. When asked how the population is kept down, J. Trafton explained that Sheriffs across the state have been working with the D.A.'s offices and the Judiciary to cut back on the Pretrial people who are arrested for a probation violation or a minor criminal violation and they can't make bail. These people can wait hundreds of days in jail before their case goes to court. Jail Administrator Raymond Porter works at tracking this and sends a biweekly report to the Judges. Because the Sheriffs across the State have "made a lot of noise" about this problem costing taxpayers a lot of money, the Judges are tracking it themselves, as well.

G. Pendleton asked if those inmates can wear ankle bracelets. J. Trafton explained that it is one of the options. There is a family in another County, whose daughter and grandchildren were murdered. Every year they do a fund raiser and the monies are donated to a different County or Law Enforcement agency that would institute electronic monitoring. Waldo County Sheriff's Office received the funding gift two years ago. A contract was signed with a company out of Texas to do the electronic monitoring, with huge success. They have been able to keep the victims safe and at the same time take people who are sitting in jail and safely put them back on the street while waiting for the court system.

When asked who makes the determination as to who is let out and who stays in jail, the Sheriff explained that it involves a lot of people including Judges, the D.A., the Sheriff's Office, and Maine Pretrial. Maine Pretrial is an organization that works with that population and provides the Sheriff's Office with a case worker right in the County's Correctional facility. As people are arraigned, if the case is somewhat routine and all agree that the person can adhere to a bail contract, then the person will be released. This keeps the population down. G. Pendleton asked if the contract was violated, is there more punishment. The Sheriff explained that this is a law-breaking violation and then they have new charges and will need to be incarcerated.

R. Desmarais asked if more judges are needed. Sheriff Trafton said that the judiciary system will say they need more help, the D.A.'s Office needs more help, social services need more help, and so does the Sheriff's Office. He acknowledged that the Board of Commissioners has been very helpful with additional staffing for his department and that everyone is working hard at keeping residents safe.

P. Rioux said he had noticed that body armor is not reused and is allowed to go with the officer when they leave. Sheriff Trafton explained that today's body armor is much more technical and that it is custom-fit to the individual; the seams have to be just right and it isn't safe for someone else to wear it.

P. Rioux also inquired about Capital Outlay. Sheriff Trafton explained that this is for larger items that need to be purchased, such as vehicles, and to replace equipment that ages out or breaks down. The biggest increase this year is because each sworn officer needs to have a vehicle and with three additional staff members, they needed to go from 3 new vehicles a year to 4 new vehicles a year. There will be no trade-ins for 2018, as the Sheriff's Office is going to keep what they have, and if they get the four new vehicles, the fleet should stay in good shape. Last year the Sheriff's Office started to transition from trucks to Ford Explorers because they are

about \$2,000.00 less expensive and the trucks don't perform well, especially in the quick turning capacity to catch speeders. It looks like the Ford Explorers will be less expensive again this year.

R. Desmarais asked if there was any money gained for turning vehicles in. J. Trafton explained that they have traded vehicles in before and the amount depends on the mileage that is on the vehicle, how long it has been in the fleet rotation. In earlier years, and with less miles, it would bring in a higher trade-in value. It is a difficult balancing act to determine when trade-in will be beneficial.

G. Pendleton asked how they determine when to trade-in versus repairing. Sheriff Trafton said it is looked at case by case. If the miles are getting high or if a vehicle is costing them too much to keep on the road, then repairing is no longer an option. There is no "magic formula" to determine when to trade-in and when to repair.

P. Rioux asked if the Fords have been recalled. Sheriff Trafton responded that yes they were, and they have made the calls to have them repaired, however the parts aren't available yet. The Sheriff's Office already took their own precautions and for \$22.00 per vehicle, carbon monoxide detectors have been installed in all the Fords.

When asked how many vehicles they currently have, J. Trafton listed that the Patrol force has 21 actively engaged with 2 spares, and for Corrections, there are four transport vehicles, and a truck for the Garden use.

R. Desmarais said that there was an increase of about \$1,000.00 in uniforms line; questioned if all badges are sewn on now and no more metal badges worn. The Sheriff discussed in detail what is required for outfitting an officer, noting that uniform costs "have exploded." He further explained that cleaning the bullet-proof vests, because these are worn every day, tends to degrade them after 2-4 years and then they are no longer safe to wear and will have to be replaced. The Sheriff explained that the uniforms are either dry cleaned or machine washed, however they don't look as good when washing them.

P. Sampson inquired about the Domestic Violence Detective and the grant. Sheriff Trafton explained that the first year's salary and benefits was covered 100% from the grant. The second year will only be funded 2/3 of last year's amount, so the salary will be almost fully covered, however benefits will not be and that cost will need to be picked up by the County. If the Sheriff reapplies for the grant next year, it will be 1/3 less funding and is almost not worth applying for it next year because the grant application took over two weeks to put together and was over 66 pages. For \$53,000.00, it was worth it, but as it decreases it won't be worth it.

P. Sampson asked if they were fully staffed for Patrolman at this point. Sheriff Trafton said that for almost six weeks they were; then in the last month they lost two people. One is going to the Secret Service and the other is going to Belfast P.D. They just put out advertisements and some good applicants have applied.

P. Sampson asked if the State Police are still on demand and was told yes. A call share agreement with State Police has been in place for many years. There are three “Patrol” zones, two zones for the County and one zone for the State Police, on a rotating 8 week cycle. The State Police asked for them to reduce how many weeks they take their zone, so now 2 weeks out of the 8 week cycle, the Sheriff’s office is covering all three zones. If Waldo County loses any more officers, J. Trafton said he will have to contact the State and request to rearrange things. He noted that part of the current staffing issues are because law enforcement is not as popular as it used to be; young people don’t want to work nights, weekends, holidays, etc. and it is a tough job. Now young people can earn degrees, go somewhere else, and make a lot more money with those degrees.

R. Desmarais asked if the School Resource Officers work for the Sheriff’s Office during the summer and the Sheriff said yes, that is why the County funds 25% of that Officer’s salary and the other 75% is paid by the school.

There was discussion on the fuel request line. With three more vehicles on the road, there will be very little left in that budget at the end of this year.

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Curly seconded to approve the Waldo County Sheriff’s budget as presented at \$1,610,585.00. Unanimous.**

(BREAK)

FACILITIES BUDGET REVIEW – 1030:

Present was Keith Nealley, Facilities Manager for the County buildings. He listed some of the projects performed during 2017 as follows:

- A new generator has been installed in the Communications Center.
- LED lights have been installed in the Communications Center and also in the District Courthouse.
- A solar hot water system has been installed in the Re-entry Center. He will be tracking the savings. Usually there are 32 people staying there, with showers every day; there is 20 to 25 loads of laundry a day; and the kitchen uses a lot of hot water, as well. This should take a load off the old boiler and be a great savings for the County.
- In July heat pumps were installed in the Day Rooms. Often it has been over 90 degrees in the summer months. These are both heating and cooling units. There has been a decrease in the power usage since their installation – likely because there aren’t fans all over the place blowing; they are able to just crack their doors open and the cool air circulates around. He believes there will be a savings on oil as well when they are used for heating.

The State is building a new courthouse and it should be done in the spring of 2019. The Commissioners and he have been discussing how to use the District and Superior Court space.

The fuel oil price has been locked in at \$2.08 (use about 15,000 gallons per year) and propane was locked in at \$1.29 per gallon (use about 5,000 gallons per year), this is much lower than the State average of \$2.64 as of this meeting's date.

The budget now has a Tower Site Maintenance account, there are now four tower sites. Access needs to be maintained after every snow storm by shoveling and snow blowing, test running the generators etc. With power outages, they have to keep running from site to site to keep the generators running. This has increased the budget by \$500.00. He increased the snow removal a bit, this varies from year to year depending on the weather.

It has been a real challenge with cleaners for the County buildings and they will be going out to bid in December for a new cleaner. K. Nealley expects the cost of cleaning will increase.

There was discussion of the Capital Outlay.

K. Trussell and B. Arseneau explained that all the Commissioners columns show zeros for the capital outlay, there is no capital expenditures. It will be funded under one of the Reserve accounts Facilities All Other.

There was discussion regarding the plans at the new State's Courthouse building for a very small area for the District Attorney's office. The Commissioners explained that if they had requested larger space for the District Attorney's Office, it would have been very costly.

****P. Rioux moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the Facilities budget as presented at \$284,001.00. Unanimous.**

WALDO COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION BUDGET REVIEW – 1080/4719:

Present was Bill Gillespie of the Waldo County Firefighters Association. He thanked the County Commissioners for the support over the past five years.

They have a burn building in Waldo; this is so training can be done in a live fire. There are only 6 certified live fire training facilities in the State. W.C.F.A. invested some of last year's funding from the County to have an engineering study done to ensure that they can continue to safely use their facility for years to come; they also had their property surveyed to make sure property lines were pinned properly and it is deeded as it should be. They also invested to improve the facility with roof props and a rescue tower, just built late summer, to practice rope descents, etc. The W.C.F.A. also puts fire fighters through classes; there were 24 fire fighters who graduated from basic fire school, they put 24 students through a pump class, and 18 students through an Evox class, and they participated in a basic Fire Officer class for Chiefs. So they have done a lot of training this year and they also offer grants to Fire Departments that need assistance with training.

P. Rioux asked if there was a shortage of firefighters. B. Gillespie cited, as an example, that when he is out of town, Liberty has no coverage. Montville has to cover for them. This is the case with pretty much every town in the county. These are bedroom communities and people don't stay in town to work anymore. There will hopefully be legislation in the next few months to try to figure out ways to recruit and retain fire fighters. If we think it's expensive now to fund fire departments, in 10 years the cost will be astronomic. The law states that there has to be 2 firefighters outside for every certified firefighter inside the building or you have to stand down unless life-safety involved.

P. Rioux asked if there were any efforts to recruit people and get young people interested in volunteering. B. Gillespie said he has been working for two years on the state level to try to get more volunteers. He is in charge of the Length of Service Program (LOSP) that was put into place 2 years ago; it has taken the Governor two years to appoint a Board so they can start looking at funding for a retirement program for volunteer firefighters. The younger people are not interested in the hard work and commitment it takes to be a volunteer firefighter. They need to figure out not only in Waldo County, but in the State, how are they going to recruit and how to make these small Town departments survive.

When asked if there was an age limit, B. Gillespie stated "absolutely not", Belfast's Fire Chief is 87 years old and one of his Assistant Chief is in his 90's. It is based on what you can physically do, such as pumping the truck or traffic control, this can free up someone else that can do more strenuous job.

P. Sampson said that Unity college students have been a big help for their town. Unity has a "Young Explorers" program. B. Gillespie said a good Scouts group is also a "feeder" program into volunteering; however a lot of towns are losing those civic programs because kids today aren't interested anymore.

There was discussion regarding people who work and their employers allowing them to leave for calls; however many work far away and aren't able get there in time.

****P. Curley moved, P. Rioux seconded to approve the Waldo County Firefighters Association budget as presented at \$5,000.00. Unanimous.**

COMMUNICATION CENTER – 1076:

Since Director Owen Smith could not be present due to a medical matter, A. Fowler spoke for Communications Center.

A. Fowler explained that the biggest increase to this budget is Personnel; it is the biggest expense in the Communication Center. The chairs have to be filled 24/7. Chief Gillespie was able to supply numbers for the call volume; year to date average shows just over 28,000 calls a month, the highest month was July at 30,000 calls, total calls for service to date is 345,782.

A. Fowler noted that R. Desmarais has in the past mentioned about the overtime being so high. W. Shorey stated that O. Smith had the idea of two floaters that could be called in to cover shifts due to illness, vacation, etc. That first year it worked great, however this year one floater left and only one was left and there has been a great deal of medical issues in the Communication Center.

This is why the overtime is so high. A new floater has just been hired, however it takes about 6 months for the new person to be up to speed and the numbers to come back down. Even with that line over budget, the department overall is under budget as of right now.

There was only a one and a half hour meeting needed to reach an agreement on the Communications union contract.

Waldo's Communication Center is one of the most highly respected centers in the State. Waldo County is the second best in the State for answering time.

The last storm produced record-breaking calls for the center.

Peter Rioux asked if all calls from Waldo County go to this call center, since he lives in Winterport right on the Penobscot County line, and wondered if his calls would go to Penobscot County. Winterport's land line calls will go to Waldo County. Cell calls go to whichever the tower is closest.

D. Desmarais asked how many Dispatchers on staff for any given shift. Chief Gillespie explained from 2:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. there are 2 Dispatchers, with 3 to 4 Dispatchers and a Supervisor on the day shift; the rest of the shifts are covered with 3. During the recent storm, there were reinforcements brought in. At one point it was so busy that IAmResponding was used to page people out. It was pretty seamless.

J. Gerritsen asked why the Commissioners reduced the overtime line from the request of \$69,000.00 to \$65,000.00. W. Shorey explained that the Commissioners knew that it would be a hard sell for the budget committee, knew that needed a more conservative number and it was agreed upon that \$65,000.00 would work. And the budget request was done prior to hiring the new floater.

J. Gerritsen asked what would happen if all of the overtime budget is expended and they still need more overtime. Where would that money come from? Commissioner Fowler and Treasurer Parkman answered that as long as the department does not exceed their "bottom line" of their budget, the money can come from another area to cover that loss. Commissioner Shorey explained that the \$65,000.00 is taking into consideration that a new floater would be hired in 2018, however it takes a long time for a new hire to get up to speed. Chief Gillespie explained with all the training and classes it can take up to six months. Overtime will be needed through that six month timeframe, so the \$65,000.00 is including the new floater.

P. Rioux asked if the budget committee was allowed to alter the overtime line and was told that was allowed.

****P. Rioux moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the Communications Center budget as presented at \$1,011,441.00. Unanimous.**

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY – 1010:

Present was EMA Director Dale Rowley. D. Rowley explained the four phases of Emergency Management – Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation. Most of the time they are working Preparedness; developing emergency plans, developing mutual aid agreements, getting contact lists, and a lot of training for fire, police, EMS/EMA, and public works. EMA sets up joint exercises. EMA works with all the town emergency management directors. For the Response side, EMA operates the EOC (Emergency Operation Center) and he explained that they were overwhelmed during the last wind storm with tower sites down and needing portable generators to get up and running again. There is an Incident Management Team that can assist with wild fires and other incidents such as HazMat calls. The HAM radio amateur team is one of the finest in the state. None of the towns have to worry about having the FCC licenses renewed or reprogramming of radios because the County does that for them. And now there is also a pet shelter team. The Recovery phase lasts the longest. Still recovering from the windstorm, and will be hosting FEMA on Monday. For the towns that have submitted the damage assessments, FEMA will be coming out to the towns to review the damages. Waldo County may be able to get a Presidential Disaster Declaration. EMA does mitigation plans. Instead of each town writing its own mitigation plan, the County does a multi-jurisdictional mitigation plan. All of the Selectmen should have seen it, and many of the Towns have signed off on it. The mitigation is what projects EMA can put into place to lessen the impact of a storm, flooding, or a disaster. That is what EMA is all about.

EMA has a 2.5 person crew, and a grant-funded person also there. The part-timer is the GIS person for mapping. He has been working with ambulance services to see how long it takes them from stations to incidents, how far hospitals are from the EMS units, and providing the EMS Chiefs with that GIS analysis support. This person is also being trained to take over the Comm. Planner position eventually. The EMA and Deputy Director were hired a few days apart and both are now coming up on 12-year pay step increase.

R. Desmarais commented that the budget doesn't change much, however the workload has increased greatly. D. Rowley agreed and noted that they have only gained ½ person in 50 years since that department was created with two employees.

Half of the budget is reimbursed by the federal government through the Emergency Management Performance Grant. It is a 50/50 grant. Some of the facilities expenses and personnel costs and benefits are also covered under that grant.

Through a Homeland Security Grant, EMA receives about \$70,000.00 with a provision that a quarter of that has to go to law enforcement projects. However these funds are shrinking so we are typically trying to work on projects that will help everybody as opposed to dividing the money up amongst the recipients. We fund some training software for the fire departments and have been buying MCI equipment for some of the ambulance services with some of the Homeland Security monies.

In the past 12 years, EMA has brought in about \$8,000,000.00 in grant funds and other assistance.

****G. Pendleton moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Emergency Management Agency budget as presented at \$129,410.00. Unanimous.**

EASTERN MAINE DEVELOPMENT – 1080/4716:

B. Shorey spoke on behalf of Eastern Maine Development Corp. EMDC has been very active this year, however the biggest problem is not enough applicants from Waldo County asking for money or financing, with only three loans this year. EMDC has been handling about 4-5 loans a month equaling about \$500,000.00 to \$600,000.00. Mr. Shorey would like to see one loan a month from Waldo County. It is like bridge financing, there might be some little thing that someone may need another ten, twenty, thirty, or forty thousand dollars for; EMDC can usually take care of that part. He is on the Loan Review Committee there and they meet twice a month. The biggest loan this year from Waldo County was a small manufacturer and there was another smaller loan. The two equaled about \$400,000.00. There are a lot of experts at EMDC in financing and they should be utilized within Waldo County. EMDC can be very helpful for loans for small businesses.

B. Shorey noted within the last two months EMDC helped some people on Islesboro who didn't have quite enough financing with the loans to purchase a couple of diesel boat engines and 1,000 traps.

P. Sampson said that in Unity they have a TIFF (a revolving loan) and they are members of KVCOG. She wanted to know what EMDC could do for them that they don't already have available to them. B. Shorey said that there are about 20 different funding operations and one of the experts could contact P. Sampson.

P. Rioux asked about the previous financial issues EMDC had a few years back. W. Shorey acknowledged that they had purchased a building that was too big for them, however they have made a lot of changes and have a good credit line with Bangor Savings Bank. Every loan that EMDC makes there are two bankers sitting on the loan review board. P. Curley and R. Desmarais went with W. Shorey to a conference that was held recently in Bangor.

P. Rioux asked about specific projects that they have been involved in right here in Waldo County. W. Shorey cited the ice cream manufacturer in Monroe who needed more self-contained trailers to operate out of different locations.

P. Rioux wanted to know why businesses would go to EMDC rather than a regular bank. A lot of times there is a gap between what the bank will give for a loan versus the total amount needed. EMDC offers a "bridge" loan for the difference. W. Shorey explained that there had been some poor loans in the past but now it was more carefully managed and working well.

****R. Desmarais moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Eastern Maine Development Corporation budget as presented at \$2,000.00. Motion passed by seven; P. Rioux opposed.**

BELFAST CREATIVE COALITION – 1080/4721:

This is not just Belfast but it is countywide for farms, the arts, etc. They requested \$2,500.00 but Commissioners recommended \$1,000.00. There are different programs where they are trying to

reach out to more of the towns. Recently, they participated in the arts and economic study and found that arts can bring in a lot of economic growth and money into our County not just from tourist but from actual County residents. It can really mean a lot to a town to have someone come there to see crafts, art, or something like that, then have lunch at a local eatery etc. The goal is to do more outreach to the other communities in Waldo County.

J. Gerritsen asked why the Commissioners reduced the amount from the \$2,500.00 originally requested. A. Fowler said that the Commissioners funded them for the first year for \$1,000.00 and they also go to the municipalities for funding. The Commissioners felt comfortable with the \$1,000.00 and no more than that. B. Johnson said that the City of Belfast gives \$23,000.00.

P. Sampson said that the western Waldo County towns, Unity, Burnham, Thorndike etc., don't see any benefit from this because they do a lot of their own thing in their own area. Unity supports its own economic development for western Waldo County. That being said, \$1,000.00 out of the whole County is not that much. Even if Unity is putting in to it, it is a miniscule amount. A. Fowler asked for clarification if P. Sampson wished this amount were lower because she feels a portion of the County isn't served by this organization. P. Sampson is okay with the amount, however philosophically, she has an issue with it because it doesn't serve Unity's taxpayers. B. Johnson said that the Coalition is trying to advertise that there is culture in these other outlying areas. P. Sampson did say she is a fan of the arts, they are important to the big picture.

G. Pendleton, stated he supported bumping it up to \$2,500.00 because in the overall scheme of things, he likes to support these types of things and doesn't think the amount is going to matter much too any particular town.

****P. Sampson moved, H. Harnden seconded to approve the Belfast Creative Coalition budget at \$1,000.00.**

****J. Gerritsen, moved to amend the motion to the amount of \$2,000.00, G. Pendleton seconded; 4 in favor, 4 opposed. Failed.**

Discussion: P. Rioux said he couldn't support either amount, and he is a fan of the arts, however he cannot see the benefit for his community.

****P. Curley moved, P. Sampson seconded to approve the Belfast Creative Coalition budget at \$1,000.00. Motion passed by 7. P. Rioux opposed.**

MIDCOAST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT – 1080/4720:

B. Johnson explained under MCEDD that Waldo County was divided up so it includes only four towns as members: Searsmont, Belmont, Northport, and Lincolnville. MCEDD handles many of the same things as EMDC. They have the loan program, and various other programs. It was unfortunate that Waldo County had been divided up.

P. Sampson asked J. Gerritsen, since Lincolnville is a part of MCEDD, did/do they asked for funds from the Town also. J. Gerritsen explained this was his first year on the Board of Selectmen and didn't know that answer.

****J. Gerritsen moved, G. Pendleton seconded to approve the Midcoast Economic Development budget as presented at \$2,000.00.**

Discussion: P. Sampson said she couldn't support the idea of using the taxpayers' money to support economic development for only four towns within Waldo County. P. Curley said he had the exact same issue, and he couldn't in good conscience vote for something that will not benefit all the towns.

Vote: 2 in favor, 5 opposed. Failed.

Discussion:

A. Fowler said she wanted to point out that dues had been paid to MCEDD from Lincolnville.

J. Gerritsen stated he was in favor of funding it because he felt it was an important program and should be funded with something. He also pointed out that the County funded it for \$2,000.00 last year, and he feels that \$1,000.00 is a good compromise.

B. Johnson commented that all the towns within the County benefit when their surrounding towns increase their economic development.

G. Pendleton said he seconded B. Johnson's view. He stated that when part of the County does well and prospers with the help of organizations supporting them, then the other communities are going to prosper as well, whether or not they are seeing a direct benefit. He felt looking at the size of the budget vs \$1,000.00, he doesn't think that the individual town's tax payers are going to see a difference in their taxes. He stated what will be seen is a very small amount of money going to an organization that will have some tangible benefit countywide and it would be worth the pennies paid for that economic development.

****J. Gerritsen moved, G. Pendleton seconded to approve the Midcoast Economic Development budget at \$1,000.00. 3 in favor; 5 opposed. Failed.**

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Sampson seconded to fund nothing for the Midcoast Economic Development budget. Motion passed by 5; 3 opposed.**

TIME AND TIDE – 1080-4718:

W. Shorey said that the Budget Committee had funded \$750.00 last year because of the agricultural books that were being produced, and the Commissioners only agreed to \$750.00 this year because of the Budget Committee's decision last year. However, if the Budget Committee wanted to save money, this is the one entity that is the least active in the County.

A. Fowler stated that Time and Tide in the past was a very powerful and well working organization. It has declined in recent years. The presentation of what they can do for the County pales in comparison to what the Waldo County Garden does.

G. Pendleton said he found it odd that the Budget Committee was picking at small social organizations and instead, should be looking at ways to cut the bigger budgets like the Sheriff's – such as not funding one of the officers. He feels it is important to support organizations such as this because they may not be benefiting a specific town's residents but what they are doing is a good thing for the world and for \$750.00 he feels it is a good thing.

****G. Pendleton moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Time and Tide RC&D budget at \$750.00. 3 in favor; 5 opposed. Failed.**

****R. Desmarais moved, P. Sampson seconded to fund nothing for the Time and Tide RC&D budget. Passed by 5; 3 opposed.**

COMMISSIONERS BUDGET – 1020:

P. Sampson asked what Liability Insurance was for. It was explained that it covers all of the County properties and used for all accidents and/or lawsuits against the County.

A. Fowler noted that the Commissioners budget is actually down from 2017's budget.

****J. Gerritsen moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the Waldo County Commissioners budget as presented at \$330,446.00. Unanimous.**

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE/INTEREST – 2000:

****R. Desmarais moved, H. Harnden seconded to approve the Tax Anticipation Note budget as presented at \$10,000.00. Unanimous.**

AUDIT BUDGET – 1090:

****P. Sampson moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Audit budget as presented at \$9,000.00. Unanimous.**

DEBT SERVICE – 1095

Waldo County has no debt and is the only county in the State that is debt free.

RECORDS PRESERVATION - 2040:

R. Desmarais questioned why there is funding for Records Preservation. B. Arseneau explained that it used to be in the budget years ago. In more recent years there was a Reserve account that had some funding in it specifically for the Records Preservation. The Commissioners had decided until the monies were gone from the Reserve account to not to ask to fund it out of the operating budget. That Reserve is almost depleted. The archive in the Superior Court building has some very old software and there is concern that they may not be able to get the records information transferred over if it is not taken care of pretty soon. The \$5,000.00 figure is to try to keep up with the absolute necessities to keep up with that function.

****J. Gerritsen moved, P. Curley seconded to approve the Records Preservation budget as presented at \$5,000.00. Unanimous.**

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS – 2025:

A. Fowler stated that the best thing the County ever did was to start self-funding the insurance in 2008. At that time the County was paying in almost \$1,000,000.00 for employee benefits. This year has had some high claims causing a need for an increase. W. Shorey said to keep in mind that it has been 8 years since there has been any increase.

C. York asked if the health insurance is part of the negotiation process with the unions. A. Fowler explained as long as the coverage is not lowered from what it currently is, then it is not negotiable. Actually the current insurance coverage is above what the unions would ask for. C. York asked the Commissioners if they look at the plan design, being self-insured, for any changes and improvements. A. Fowler explained that the plan is changed as needed; they look at all the options that are available and have found that the plan as it is now, is the best avenue that they could find for the budget and the employees. There is only one other County that is self-funded like Waldo County.

****P. Curley moved, G. Pendleton seconded to approve the Employee Benefits as presented at \$1,231,300. Unanimous.**

RESERVE – 2045:

W. Shorey stated that the accountant gives the Commissioners a lecture every year that they should keep the Severance Reserve account between \$50-100,000.00 for severance. Because the County's exposure is high; if several employees retired at the same time, it would be very costly and there needs to be funds available in this Reserve. There were two long-term employees retiring this year and the County had to pay out about \$44,000.00. So now the accountant stated that this account needs to be brought back up to keep it stable.

P. Sampson asked if the payout is because they have built up vacation time etc. and if this is limited and was told yes to both questions.

P. Curley questioned if the \$25,000.00 would go to "Severance" in this Reserve, was told yes.

****G. Pendleton moved, J. Gerritsen seconded to approve the Reserves budget as presented at \$25,000.00. Unanimous.**

The Corrections/Jail Budget - 1050, was not discussed because it is capped.

P. Sampson wanted to mention that this has been her third year on the Budget Committee and this has been the most fun she has had at a Budget Committee meeting.

To allow for enough time for notification/publications, the Public Hearing and final Budget Committee meeting will be Friday, December 8, 2017 in the Maine District Courtroom, 103 Church Street, Belfast.

****G. Pendleton moved, P. Curley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by



Waldo County Assistant Clerk