

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION  
MARCH 20, 2017**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman) and Betty I. Johnson. Commissioner Fowler could attend due to a family emergency. Also present was County Clerk Barbara L. Arseneau to take minutes.

**Call to Order:** Commissioner Shorey called the court session to order at 9:00 a.m.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Present with the Commissioners was Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell, who reported the following:

County Checkbook balance:

The checkbook balance is \$53,989.95.

Jail Checkbook balance:

The checkbook balance is \$35,765.87.

Tax Anticipation Note (TAN):

\$650,000.00 has been borrowed on the TAN on the Jail portion of the budget.

\$250,000.00 has been borrowed on the TAN on the County side of the budget.

County Appropriations:

The budget is 19% expended and could be at 20.83%.

County Revenue for:

The County revenue received is 23.01%.

Corrections Appropriations:

The Corrections appropriations is at 21% expended.

Corrections Revenue:

The Corrections revenue received is 1.58%.

D. Parkman reported that Probate revenue was the highest it had ever been. One reason is more people have requested passports.

**WARRANTS:**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2017 General Fund Accounts Payable warrant and March 9, 2017 payroll in the amount of \$137,267.62. Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2017 Capital, Active & Restricted Reserve warrant in the amount of \$16,295.70. Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2017 Reentry Accounts Payable warrant and March 9, 2017 payroll in the amount of \$36,108.99. Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the March 9, 2017 MCRRC Capital & Restricted Reserve warrant in the amount of \$22,704.75. Unanimous.**

#### **FUTURE OF WALDO COUNTY EMS:**

Present: EMA Director Dale Rowley and Searsport Selectman Richard Desmarais.

D. Rowley reported that he met with the emergency services chiefs about 2 weeks ago, as he was invited to their meeting. One thing that has come to light is a staffing problem for EMS in the County. Liberty Rescue has looked at the possibility of closing down the non-profit volunteer group that is supported by Liberty and Montville. To save the service, they are looking for Liberty and Montville to raise funds to pay for a full-time EMS person and driver on and a part time administrator for paperwork.

The hospital is “pulling the plug” on the Brooks Ambulance Service due to funding issues and due to poor response because of a lack of ambulance staffing. They cannot get volunteers anymore and have had to pay people to be on call. They cannot afford new ambulances. The hospital may not continue. This includes the towns of Brooks, Knox, Jackson and Monroe.

There was a recent meeting in Montville with Liberty, Montville, Delta representatives. Delta says it takes 1,500 to 1,800 calls a year to be sustainable economically. Liberty does about 160 calls per year and Brooks does about double.

Dale was asked to speak by the EMS Chiefs with the Commissioners about hosting a workshop to analyze the problems that all the EMS units in the County are facing and to look at new approaches. Possible attendees are EMS service chiefs, key Fire representatives who have impact, County Commissioners, Town Selectmen, EMA the RCC and the Hospital.

Adrian Stone, the Searsport Ambulance Chief said at one point in the past, they had a consultant come in, make an assessment and provide advice on a business model. R. Desmarais said it was before his time so it would have been at least 13 or 14 years ago.

It is nearly impossible to keep volunteers. It is a revolving door as people go where they can be paid. D. Rowley had researched the statutes and listed all the various types of ambulance services that can be organized. He noted that the key is picking up enough calls to make it economically feasible. All want to look at different business models. He also listed the employment types of options. Many now are doing per diem and/or per call reimbursement.

R. Desmarais mentioned his 21 years of experience and noted that they have two people in Searsport who are paid to work at the Station during business hours and respond to ambulance calls in Searsport. In many other services, there is often nobody to answer calls because they are at work. Back in his home state, R. Desmarais spoke with the employers of two of his EMS responders, and the employers agreed to release those employees to answer ambulance calls. One employer agreed to continue to pay the employee even with time missed; the other employer would not. That

put a damper on it for a while. His old EMS department used to be all volunteer. Now it is \$50.00 per tone.

He expressed surprise that the County didn't have a county-wide EMS organization and monthly meetings.

W. Shorey asked what R. Desmarais thought would work. He recommended that all the EMS organizations meet together on the County level.

D. Rowley said that there is now an EMS Chiefs meeting each month, starting about five months ago.

There was brief discussion of how Life Flight works and its model. It was noted that they are all paid, not volunteers.

When asked if he knew of any County that has a County ambulance service in Maine, R. Desmarais responded that it was not aware of any.

D. Rowley noted that most of the ambulance services in Waldo County are on the coast. The inland services are dwindling.

D. Rowley said that the EMS folks would like the County to host a meeting and have other elected officials there along with the EMS folks to discuss this. It was thought that the "profit" ambulance groups would come in and fill the void. Delta is actually not for profit. They also expressed that they could not meet the required response times. Ambulances need to respond in 20 minutes. At times, in some parts of the County, it may take an hour. R. Desmarais discussed how people would like to have EMT training but it is difficult to get people to train them.

Belfast is able to make money on transports and this helps to pay for the rescues.

D. Rowley noted that it is difficult when it's Town by Town because the number in attendance is so low. If it was done on a County level, more would attend. This is what the Fire Departments are doing more often.

W. Shorey recommended holding meetings once a month and "pool" the knowledge to see who is operating, who isn't, how many calls are being taken in each town, etc. R. Desmarais felt it would help to iron things out and that the training piece needs to be addressed. B. Johnson suggested that it would be a brain-storming type of meeting.

W. Shorey said that the County had held a few meetings for the Fire Chiefs to help resolve some questions and issues they were having. He felt that the Commissioners need to know more and understand the needs of EMS, what resources and training they need, etc.

B. Johnson thought it might possible that municipal officers may be willing to consider regionalizing ambulance service since it is a problem.

D. Rowley said Montville and Liberty are each contributing \$4,000.00 and are each being asked to pay \$40,000.000 at upcoming their Town Meetings for a temporary fix. There was brief discussion of how the paperwork needs to be handled.

D. Rowley stated that he believed regionalization was going to become necessary because the towns can't afford to do this alone anymore.

W. Shorey asked how many regions would need to be considered for the entire County of Waldo. D. Rowley explained that this was where meetings and discussions would need to be held to discuss the needs – how many would need to be 24/7, which places have the most calls, etc. Now, at times it can take 30 minutes or more for an ambulance to arrive on scene, based on availability. He described how a page goes out, they wait five minutes for a response, if there is no response, page again and wait 3 minutes. Then they call another agency. 30 minutes goes by very quickly with this process.

W. Shorey asked how much it was costing Searsport. R. Desmarais said it was pretty much revenue neutral. The Town follows up with the insurance. With no classes, the crews were burning out.

It was noted that the City of Belfast is set up well because they have some full-time employees.

R. Shorey said the paperwork is always behind for most towns. An administrative person is needed to handle all that on a timely basis.

W. Shorey asked what Searsport is involved with outside of Searsport. R. Desmarais explained that Searsport serves as mutual aid to Stockton.

The Commissioners decided to hold a meeting, get all together and see what discussions could be held to start looking at how to address the EMS situation.

R. Desmarais said he believed that people who are working in EMS who move from one town to another for per diem should have their time worked included.

D. Rowley asked if it should be a meeting at night. The Commissioners felt that would be the only way for people to be available.

Winterport is constructing a new fire station and ambulance garage which will have the capability to have EMTs stay overnight in bunk rooms. R. Desmarais said that is the best way.

D. Rowley said it all comes down to “economy of scale”. Some towns have the finances; many do not. With only one local hospital, it all depends on locality of the person needing assistance. Winterport citizens go to Bangor for most everything. Lincolnton citizens go to Camden or Rockport.

There was discussion of how the coastal agencies could be affected if the inland agencies fold. This could impact quick responses to their own towns. The County is so spread out. It is nearly 800 square miles.

R. Desmarais and D. Rowley both agreed that training is a huge problem – both in terms of available trainers, financing the training, and even having people available to take the training. Many people just can't spend the time and keep up with the amount of calls. There aren't enough people to keep up with the volume of EMS calls. These people usually have a job elsewhere.

The only commercial ambulances are Northeast, Delta (which is not profit and are out of Augusta) and Capital in Bangor. Delta and Capital don't go far into the County and usually only want to do transports.

D. Rowley said every agency present at the last EMS Chief meeting stated they were having some level of personnel issues, including Belfast. The Commissioners said they would discuss some dates and get back to D. Rowley with those dates. A letter will be written and send out.

### **SUPPORT OF COUNTY FOOD PANTRIES:**

Present were EMA Director Dale Rowley and Vance Wells of Time and Tide RC &D.

D. Rowley said he has become involved because of planning for mass feeding in the event of a disaster. He felt it made sense to work along with the food pantries to make this food available and possibly utilize volunteers to either support those pantries or set up temporary pantries for towns that don't have any.

He initially thought food banks and food pantries were the same. Food banks are a warehouse and the pantries are the distribution points. The only bank is Good Shepherd. There is a fee charged to the food pantries to help with the cost of running the Good Shepherd. There has been some issue with Good Shepherd receiving food free from food drives and then charging the food pantries for it.

D. Rowley explained that the thought was to create a 501C3 in Waldo County as a food bank. Anyone who wanted to donate food could send it to the food bank and the bank could distribute it. D. Rowley offered to the Commissioners the suggestion to use part of the old Jail for record storage and part of the building as a food bank. A 501-C3 could seek donations. The County wouldn't be responsible to pay for it. Perhaps the 501-C3 could apply for grants. He suggested utilizing the Reentry Center residents to run it, using heat pumps in various parts of the buildings so that the temperature could be correct for the records and correct for the food bank. Perhaps other agencies could be involved in helping with this.

W. Shorey explained that he is already looking at working on adding to the existing building at the County Garden Property to create space for food storage. It could also have space for dried goods, as well.

D. Rowley asked if the County would be interested in creating and being involved with a food bank. The Commissioners were willing to consider this. All agreed that Reentry residents could do some of the work with the food bank. There may be grants available to help with this, as well.

B. Johnson said that she has been hearing that there is a need for an additional food bank in this area. Funding has been going to the Good Shepherd Food Bank and some of the pantries are having difficulty getting food from them because there isn't money available.

D. Rowley felt that a County food bank could be managed with much lower overhead cost and be closer to the people in this area.

V. Wells said that the USDA has a program for food centers that is not just for food pantries but also for farmers to bring it to one point. The benefit is that it makes it concentrated. The food could be handled and stored at the facility. He commented that it was a shame that Coastal County building didn't work out. It had the ability to process the food in its large kitchen.

He also mentioned that there are people who need work but it has been hard to get people to work in community gardens. Finances are needed to get people to work there to do such things as plowing, harrowing, weeding and insect control. Time and Tide has the land.

W. Shorey said the courts are loaded with substance abuse cases and there isn't enough room for these people in jails. He felt that at some point there will be alternative sentencing where these types of inmates, who aren't violent, could work for the County Garden, etc.

It was noted that the time has come to have a full-time person running, managing and training for such things at a County food bank, EMS services, etc. It is becoming a full-time thing to coordinate all this and people need to be paid for this work in order for it to run well.

The Commissioners will ask Rick Kersbergen of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to meet with the Commissioners and D. Rowley to discuss this further and ask for his assistance in looking at grant funds to start a County food bank.

V. Wells said that one resident has about 400 acres that is designated for agriculture and would like very much to see this land used for production. This is a potential area the County could develop on if they wanted to talk to her. Part of this is related to non-profit and some is profit. The school garden is on that property.

#### **SHERIFF'S REPORT:**

Present with the Commissioners was Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton.

1. J. Trafton reported that they had selected David Wight, a retired officer from California, effective March 20, 2017 at the 16-year rate (with certification) of \$23.50 per hour due to his experience.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to hire David Wight as full-time Patrol Deputy at the rate of \$23.50 per hour effective March 20, 2017. Unanimous.**

#### **HANCOCK COUNTY TOWER FREQUENCY REQUEST:**

Present with the Commissioners was Communications Director Owen Smith and EMA Director Dale Rowley.

O. Smith reported that the Hancock County Communications Director had requested putting some frequencies for Hancock on the Stockton Springs Tower. O. Smith explained that he was reluctant about this because some of the frequencies were too close to Waldo's and it might cause issues with

Waldo's frequencies. The Commissioners stated that Waldo County had spent a fair amount of money to address its own repeater issues and the Commissioners agreed that they were not interested in doing this.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to deny Hancock County's request to put frequencies on the Stockton Springs Tower. Unanimous.**

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Present to report correspondence was County Clerk Barbara Arseneau as follows:

1. Eaton Peabody will file the 2017 Annual Report for Congress Street Hill Property, LLC again this year for \$215.00. B. Arseneau reviewed the names of the managers and the Commissioners confirmed them.
2. The Commissioners noted pay step increases for the following employees:
  - Prosecutorial Assistant/Supervisor Dean Jackson will reach the 8-year level on April 1, 2017 as he was hired at the 5-year level on April 1, 2014. He will receive a pay increase effective April 1<sup>st</sup> to \$24.97 per hour.
  - District Attorney's Office Administrative Legal Secretary Felicia Story will have completed five year of employment on April 9, 2017 with a pay increase to \$21.39 per hour. Her vacation leave will also increase to 120 hours per year.
3. A certified Accountants firm asked to be included in future bids for auditors for the County of Waldo. B. Arseneau will file that request for the future.
4. The Restorative Justice Project sent an invitation to a Volunteer Appreciation Event and Visioning Day on April 29, 2017 at high Mountain Hall in Camden from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. Commissioner Johnson said she would like to attend.
5. The 2017 Convention of Maine Counties will be September 8 through 10, 2017. The Commissioners instructed B. Arseneau to make rooming reservations.
6. B. Arseneau reminded the Commissioners that she will be attending an afternoon Notary Public Workshop in Waterville on March 22, 2017.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

B. Arseneau requested that the Commissioners approve the minutes from the March 2, 2017 Waldo County Commissioners Court Session as presented.

**\*\*A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve the minutes from the March 2, 2017 Waldo County Commissioners Court Session. Unanimous.**

#### **COMMISSIONERS MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS:**

1. B. Johnson reported that MCEDD met and Sun Dog met with them and MCEDD will be sponsoring that program again this year as they did last year. They have about two years at the most

before laws change. This should be grandfathered so this is good. Sun Dog gave a nice presentation to them.

2. B. Johnson will be attending a regional meeting related to Aging Well in Waldo County that is being held in Ellsworth on Wednesday.

3. B. Johnson said she received a call about what kind of safety services are offered by the County. She believed it was related to immigrants, etc. They have already met with the Sheriff about a year ago. She will speak with him about that. She is aware of several law enforcement agencies that have safety programs but is not sure about other agencies.

**NEXT COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION:**

Commissioner Shorey will not be away as planned so Commissioner Johnson and he rearranged the April Court sessions as follows: The session on Thursday, April 20, 2017 is cancelled. The next first regular session will be April 5, 2017 and the second regular session is April 19, 2017.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn the court session at 11:13 a.m. Unanimous.**

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