

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION  
JUNE 16, 2021**

**PRESENT:** Commissioners Amy R. Fowler (Chairman), William D. Shorey, and Betty I. Johnson. County Clerk Barbara Arseneau took minutes. Also present was Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey, and Finance Director Karen Trussell. The court session was conducted both in-person and by teleconference.

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

**FINANCE REPORT**

Present was Finance Director Karen Trussell reported the following:

The County Checkbook balance is \$62,615.62.

The Jail Checkbook balance is \$4,147.46.

**TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE:**

\$2,700,000.00 has been borrowed on the T.A.N.; \$1,500,000.00 by the County and \$1,200,000.00 by Corrections. At this point last year, \$3,450,000.00 had been borrowed, so it is \$750,000.00 less this year.

**County Appropriations:**

42% of the County 2021 budget has been expended and it could be 46% at this time.

**County Revenue:**

50.94% of the County revenue has been received at this time.

**Corrections Appropriations:**

35% of 2021 budget has been expended and could be 46% expended.

**Corrections Revenue:**

2.50% of the Corrections revenue has been received at this time.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to file the Financial Report. Unanimous.**

**WARRANTS**

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the June 10, 2021 General Fund Accounts Payable warrant and June 10, 2021 payroll in the amount of \$200,888.69. Unanimous.**

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the June 10, 2021 Capital, Active & Restricted Reserve warrant in the amount of \$13,871.83. Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the June 10, 2021 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable warrant and June 10, 2021 payroll in the amount of \$60,761.50. Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the June 10, 2021 MCRRC (Corrections) Restricted Reserve in the amount of \$2,554.61. Unanimous.**

## **HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT**

Present was Human Resources Director KelLee Gray who reported the following:

1. On June 3, Governor Mills signed into law new paid state holiday, called “Juneteenth” in observance of the emancipation of the slaves. It is a paid State holiday, it does not become effective until 90 days after legislative sessions are out, and technically they are still in session. She explained that the County has four union contracts that state that they must be paid for any state declared holidays. Each contract says they are to be paid for it “when it is declared.” This is an unanticipated expenditure that could cost roughly \$12,852.10, not including if they work it, which would include overtime, and then can be “banked”. It will cost the County \$3,080.71 for non-union employees for a paid day off. This is a total unanticipated cost of \$15,932.81 minimum. The County now has 13 officially declared holidays. K. Gray will send out notices to all employees explaining the holiday, and that non-essential offices will be closed this Friday, June 18<sup>th</sup>. She will also contact the unions to let them know they will now have another paid holiday.
2. Open enrollment with Delta Dental is approaching. Since she is new to the process, K. Gray spoke with the Delta agent regarding the process. First of all, there is no rate change for this year. Since there is no rate change, the County can change the open enrollment period and recommended that this coincide with when the health insurance open enrollment occurs from November 15 to December 15th. The Commissioners agreed.
3. K. Gray has been updating databases as she is receiving updated emergency contact forms.
4. Group Life Insurance with MainePERS: An employee recently inquired about whether or not an employee can change it to increase or add a dependent, change the amount, without a “life event.” It turns out the employee can do so by filling out a form and handling this directly with MainePERS.
5. New Base Rates for Group Health Insurance: The base rate will change from .46 cents to .48 cents on July 1, 2021, which the County pays.
6. Freedom of Information Access Training: All elected officials are required to train for this. K. Gray also signed up and took this and noted that there has been a change. Now all who are required to take this training have to take a class with an active teacher who can respond back to questions. This requires that a certification be printed off as well. The key is that certification is required. K. Gray said the state changed the requirement to include an active educator and the course has to be over 2 to 2.5 hours long. The Commissioners asked K. Gray to find out the schedule so they can sign up. There is an additional fee of \$35.00 because it is an active class. She believes the intent is for all elected officials and those who need FOAA training take this whether they already took one online this year or not. The Commissioners also requested that she look into getting an instructor in to teach all the department heads and Commissioners at the same time.

7. Interview Panels for Communications Director Position: There are four applicants and interviews will hopefully be set up for next week, and the following week, the Commissioners will interview the chosen finalists.

8. The first labor/management committee meeting with Communications Center management and the union on June 9<sup>th</sup> went very well. There were things brought up that they were able to come to a consensus on, and came up with some great ideas. This is helpful because they are currently understaffed so they are moving the scheduling a little bit to help the dispatchers and the center.

9. Janet Banks has been selected to fill the P/T Register of Deeds Clerk position effective June 15, 2021 at \$17.18 per hour for 25 hours a week, except for 10 weeks in summer when she will be at 35 hours per week.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve this hiring Janet Banks as part-time Register of Deeds effective June 15, 2021 at \$17.18 per hour for 25 hours per week, with full-time for 10 weeks in the summer months. Unanimous.**

10. (J-sun Bailey was invited to sit in on the next discussion.) Currently there are policies, standards for procedures, etc. that need to be updated and corrected, etc. The current system is very “paper heavy” because H.R. sends an email notifying employees, then make copies or sends for employees to make copies. HRIS is a system that is secure for document holdings – basic documents for access to everyone such as blank W-4’s, direct deposits, and manuals. The second type is a database that holds all the legal documents that would be in a personnel file. A physical paper file would no longer need to be maintained. This would reduce manual labor, office supplies, and most importantly, the files would be kept current. It would make it easier for employees to look at manuals, and reduce the chance of important papers being misplaced. This would work for all department heads and employees to be able to look up. Personnel files would be secured for H.R. The other documents would be accessible by all employees.

J. Bailey said they will look get a cost estimate and report back to the Commissioners. K. Gray thought it will likely be between \$3,000.00 and \$7,000.00 for the initial setup. She has already been purging files and will continue and that way what is scanned won’t cost as much. After that, it will be a monthly fee, likely similar in cost to the payroll system.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT**

Present was Information Technology Manager J-sun Bailey, who reported the following:

1. J. Bailey has been performing a lot of Spillman changes lately. He has set up “dashboard-like” arrangements types of systems, including one for the Community Liaison so that he can see the calls coming in and see if he should be addressing. It is “read only”; he can’t add data or anything like that. It is monitored in his office and that office is secured as much as possible and locked when he isn’t there. J. Bailey has set up the same thing in the patrol room on a screen so that they can monitor calls coming in.

2. He has been working with the Chief Deputy. There is an assessment that goes over mental health, trauma, and substance use, and this has been put on Spillman so that it can be tracked and reported in the future as needed. There is bill that has been held over in Committee that tracks perceived race and gender on traffic stops that will be able to report on. It isn’t law yet, but Spillman

has that capability so he is working on setting it up now so that when it does become law, the County will be ready to go. He's setting it up so once the data is entered, it can generate meaningful reports.

3. J. Bailey has seen an increase in spam emails coming through recently. This is happening everywhere, including other counties and businesses. He's trying to see if there is any way to block those from coming in.
4. Regarding document and time management, he has been receiving requests from more department heads so he told them he would look into it and figure out what options are out there.
5. The Reentry Center got a new camera system for their security cameras so he will be setting up multiple monitors in their rooms so that they can see and layout the cameras so it makes sense with the movement flow. When asked, he confirmed that this cost was included in the 2021 budget.
6. The County was given some test cell phones and hot spots from AT&T. It was tried out a year ago and coverage wasn't good. They say they've put up 200 more towers in Maine. The County has been provided these phones for a month at no charge, no contracts needed to be signed; they can just to try them out. He sent those out with the Deputies to try them out in different areas so they can let him know what they find, during any down time. Knox County just swapped over to them. J. Bailey has spoken with a few and asked if they saw any difference and they reported that it is just about as good as anything else they've had. He told the representative he'd get back to them.
7. He is nearly finished with the proposal request for the RFP for the telephone system. When that's done he will send it to the Commissioners to review and sign.
8. He has heard that going to be a new Windows 11, and that Windows 10 will be done in 2025. He noted that the County doesn't need to worry about that in the immediate future.
9. He sent a question about budget line items to the Commissioners and asked if they had any input or questions about it. They said they'd like to discuss this at a later time.

## **NEW HIRE**

Present was Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton and Chief Deputy Jason Trundy. J. Trafton presented the following:

1. One of the civil deputies retired back in May and they talked with Joe Rogers, who is a retired Hampden Police Chief. He applied for the Civil Deputy position and has been selected.  
**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to hire Joe Rogers as part-time civil deputy effective June 16, 2021 at \$21.80 per hour. Unanimous.**
2. Corrections Officer Holly Castle has been selected to fill the vacant Corporal position.  
**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve promoting Holly Castle to fill the vacant Corporal position effective June 16, 2021 at \$23.06 per hour. Unanimous.**
3. Corrections Staffing Issues: Knox Sheriff Carroll and his staff met with the Chief and him yesterday. Like so many jails, Knox County Jail has a critical manpower shortage in Corrections. They've contracted with contractors to put a new air handling system in the jail. They are maxed at 70

inmates and 25 of those are Waldo County inmates. They need to drop the population to 30 in order to have the air handling system installed. J. Trafton was hoping to use Two Bridges Jail to do that but their staffing problem is even more critical. They have plenty of beds, but only have enough staff for 70 inmates. Somerset is in the same situation as all the other big jails as they are 50% down in staff. This is the same story all over the state. Waldo's corrections staff is full right now. Waldo has to board inmates at other facilities, usually at Knox for the past year or so. A lot of factors are causing problems throughout the district. The courts are coming back to life, and over a month ago, statewide the courts are 27,000 cases behind and are filling up jails now because all the pending cases that were on hold during COVID are now being adjudicated. The Corrections staffing problem has been coming on slowly across the state, and COVID really worsened it. Knox County has lost several corrections officers because they were being mandated 80 hours a week. They have instituted a \$200.00 per week stipend to try to keep their employees. They are asking if Waldo can send any of its staff to help there in Knox. Two Bridges Jail has been asked to take some from Knox and Waldo while Knox's HVAC system is being worked on, but do that, Two Bridges needs staff and have asked for 18 corrections officers to be sent down to assist them. J. Trafton mentioned that these issues need to be viewed on a district basis, with the four counties in District 6 because the staffing shortages are not going to go away. He described various incentives other Maine counties are offering to try to get qualified corrections officers. Waldo is doing well in that it has more inmates in diversion programs and pretrial contracts than any other county in the district. A. Fowler asked if there were any inmates in Knox that could be brought to Waldo's Reentry Center. J. Trafton said they are taking 3 Knox inmates into the Reentry system this week, as well as a couple from Two Bridges to assist them. This will limit beds in Waldo. They are brainstorming and may have to hold some inmates rather than residents for a while. Waldo keeps a minimal staff at the reentry partly because the population they serve is minimum security, with programming provided. The real issue is Waldo's 25 inmates being housed in Knox. W. Shorey said that the time had come to put some funding toward assisting the other jails taking Waldo's inmates to get staffing. A lot of the issue has been caused by the virus. The court systems have been backed up. The Commissioners briefly discussed ARPA funds and it seems that anything related to jails and regular staff is not included. The Commissioners discussed perhaps coming up with up to \$100,000.00 to help Knox and Two Bridges but acknowledged that it is difficult to get people to work in the jails. The Commissioners expressed that they want the Sheriff, Chief, and Major to know the Commissioners stand behind them and will try to find some funding to assist with this problem.

J. Trundy said yesterday's meeting brought out that this is a district-wide problem and there are a lot of factors that are involved. There need to be district-wide conversations. He expressed appreciation that the Commissioners are willing to discuss putting funds toward this. It will be a long-term problem – for at least 3 to 5 years. There are short-term problems and long-term problems. Currently there is a national negative tone toward law enforcement. People can do other jobs for the same pay elsewhere. He felt that the four counties should keep meeting, do some brainstorming, and try to come up with a long-term solution.

J. Trafton said that the next step will be having a discussion with the union rep. Knox has the same union that Waldo does, so he'll speak with the union representative. Now that he knows that there is some money to work with, perhaps they can work out ways for some employees to be willing to travel to Two Bridges to help them open up a pod and get staffing, since this is very much needed.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to allow the Sheriff and Chief to negotiate with Knox County and Two Bridges Jail and will assist financially from the Jail budget account #4030 up to \$100,000.00. Unanimous.**

The Commissioners expressed their hope that this would be a chance for the four counties with three facilities (Sagadahoc and Lincoln share a jail) to work back to what has been talked about years ago, which is some regionalization. They believed good ideas could be developed between the four counties.

Also present was Prosecutorial Assistant E. Harvey, who mentioned that in addition to the four counties and District Attorney's Office, it would be wise to bring Probation and Parole to the table because they are also responsible for a lot of incarcerations. If DOC was also involved, through Probation and Parole, there could be some outside suggestions of things that may be available through state facilities. J. Trafton said he believed that was a good idea.

J. Trafton said that Sheriff Carroll has talked with D.A. Natasha Irving and she's on board with these things.

#### **PRESENTATION – SCOPE OF WORK**

Present was James Tatgenhorst and Charles Earley of Lewis and Malm, along with EMA Director to review the agreement, and to make a presentation. The Commissioners had received draft copies, and the architects provided final documents. D. Rowley and Lewis & Malm have been negotiating over the past few weeks and figuring out duties of the County and the engineers, as well as a fee schedule.

C. Earley explained usually they require 30% up front, and this spreadsheet breakdown helped to figure things out. They are willing to work as long as needed to get this done, and are very excited they were selected for the project. They both live in Winterport and stated that it is nice to work on a project close to home. They can meet with Dale weekly. There is a lot of civil engineering that will need to be done both in Swanville and Belfast property near the airport. They will bring a complete "soup to nuts" architectural team to the table. There are only question in terms of the budget was numbers assigned to buildings, and this starts with site work and permitting. They doubted that there would be much permitting with Swanville, but likely would be with the Belfast property. There will be additional fees necessary to do that work, but they don't know what that will be at this point. Part of their job is to figure this out.

Regarding structure, architecture, mechanical, plumbing, and electrical, that will all be a standard approach.

Regarding the Swanville project and the Deeds/District Attorney project, these will likely not require a large amount of permitting. They receiving some data from D. Rowley for construction of the Public Safety Building and doing an analysis of the Public Safety Building done by WBRC around 12 years ago so they can establish a benchmark for what was already permitted, and be more familiar with the existing property and dealing with the planning board. There can be supplemental agreements to this agreement, which are one to two pages for the specific change. They've estimated the basic number of meetings that will likely occur with the City of Belfast. Supplemental documents can be drawn up as things progress.

W. Shorey asked what the initial payment would be to start things. C. Earley stated that they believed \$10,000.00 was a reasonable number, and the Commissioners agreed. At the end of July there will need to be the first report to the federal government and perhaps there will be a better idea of what meets the criteria. This will provide a little safety margin without slowing the project now. Between now and then there is survey work that needs to be done. They plan to have a workshop with the land planners. One is responsible for the civil and planning and the other is good with creative ideas. Not all the engineers will be involved at that point. There was brief discussion about the land, tilled area, storm water, etc.

C. Earley handed out schedules for timelines from now through 2024 for planning, permitting, getting out to bid hopefully in 2022. Once out to bid, the construction documents should be done. Then there they'll work on design for the Deeds first, followed by the District Attorney's Office second.

With the property near the airport, working backwards from the end date, knowing surveys will take longer, rougher terrain, etc., will be more involved and will take time.

Each project has been assigned a number, up to six (6). As they set up filing for the projects, they will use those numbers. C. Earley said it was great working with D. Rowley and what he had already established with his planning books.

The other important thing he and Dale came up with is with the \$5.7 million budget that is construction dollars for Swanville and Belfast properties, because site development costs have not been determined, they will be using project No. 6 as a contingency for construction dollars for Projects 1-5. As the schedule moves forward, the airport site development might reduce and the funds could be used, elsewhere. The normal architectural-engineering-planning part will cover expenses and money could flow into another project. If it falls outside the normal practice, they will re-evaluate.

There was brief discussion about the food warehouse, irrigation, water source, etc. at the Swanville property that will require analysis. They will work with D. Rowley to get consulting specialists in as needed for this. It would be good to include those who work and use that space, as well.

C. Earley reviewed the Projected Construction Costs and A/E Fee Breakdown page and how billing would be done. D. Rowley said these are consistent with what he's seen on other projects.

C. Earley directed attention to the final contract document narrative description of the projects. Liability insurance information was also provided. The AIA contract doesn't allow for many edits, so if any typos are found, they can be addressed. All changes that were deleted or changed are referenced, and are in a separate document that D. Rowley has so anyone could see what had been changed and the date.

W. Shorey said that the Commissioners have trust in Lewis and Malm and hopefully they will have faith in the Commissioners to be a good partner.

Regarding hourly rates, those can be revisited each January. All understood.

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to sign the contract with Lewis and Malm. Unanimous.** The County will make the initial down payment as requested.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None.

## **FACILITIES REPORT**

Facilities Manager Keith Nealley could not attend due to illness so he will email a report on Friday.

## **FINAL COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Present was Communications Center Director Owen Smith and Mike Larrivee who reported the following “parting thoughts,” with his impending retirements. He submitted a sheet of possible future needs for the Communications Center, which he had discussed with Dispatch Supervisors Mike Larrivee and Linda Wry-Remillard.

1. The layout in the radio room is not as it should be for adequate Dispatcher situational awareness. Positions should all be in the center of the room with space to walk around most of the perimeter.
2. A new recorder will need to be purchased at some point to replace the current Achorn Equature Recorder. It has always been leased in the past and been a monthly expense on the budget.
3. Zybex consoles will need to be replaced as they are reaching their intended life span. They have been replacing one lift per year at nearly \$13,000.00 for parts to repair and do the labor. Five (5) positions would cost approximately \$80,000.00.
4. The floor in the radio room needs to be replaced as it is seriously worn. The recommendation is for anti-static carpet squares, which would also help deaden some ambient noise.
5. A vehicle is requested for the Communications Center. The current vehicle being used technically belongs to the Sheriff’s Office, and the Center needs its own for checking tower sites, traveling to meetings, training, etc. Since a full-time radio vendor hasn’t been available for over a year, M. Larrivee has been going and doing some of the work.
6. Space issues should be addressed. The Supervisors share a desk in the Director’s office. The Quality Assurance space is small and cramped and the part-time Communication Clerk is set up in the kitchen/training/conference room which can only hold about 10-12 people. There should be more than one toilet at the center and it is often not available when needed.
7. O. Smith also submitted a copy of an email from UniTel indicating that they are not interested in selling the site/tower on Quaker Hill in Unity. A list of items was included for consideration for an agreement for Waldo County Regional Communications Center to attach facilities to the UniTel Tower. O. Smith said it was pretty standard.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to go into executive session at 10:51 a.m. for discussion of non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(f). Unanimous.**

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to come out of executive session at 11:04 a.m. Unanimous.**



**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded that Michael Larrivee continue to work with UniTel to negotiate placement for WCRCC technology on their tower site and for him to continue to work closely with the landowner in Unity for placement of the tower. Unanimous.**

W. Shorey thanked Owen for help, work, and good ideas, including with union negotiations.

B. Johnson said she enjoyed working with him, valued their talks, and wished him the best.

A. Fowler said they could not thank him enough and the people that attended his retirement party demonstrated the respect, love, and admiration that people have for him. He has been a great role model and M. Larrivee is an example of learning from that example. She said the County may still need him from time to time for various things.

**\*\*A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 11:10 a.m. for non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(f). Unanimous.**

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to come out of executive session at 11:15 a.m. Unanimous.**

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to ask Owen Smith to remain as Communications Director until June 30, 2021 while a new Communications Director is hired. Unanimous.**

O. Smith agreed to stay until June 30, 2021.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Present was County Clerk Barbara Arseneau who reported the following correspondence:

1. The Town of Searsport Selectmen sent a letter indicating that they are working toward improving broadband connectivity for residents, business, and port. They requested that if any funds become available to Waldo County through the pandemic relief grants that are earmarked for expanding broadband, that the Commissioners consider this project for assistance.
2. The Town of Palermo Selectmen sent a letter stating that they are working with other towns through the Southwestern Waldo County Broadband Coalition toward resolving poor internet connectivity. They requested that the County consider allocating American Rescue plan Act funds to that effort.
3. The Belfast Soup sent a letter requesting a donation from the County. Commissioner Fowler said that they want to be included in the budget requests. The Commissioners said to send a letter explaining this.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

On Monday she submitted draft minutes from the appeal hearing for abatement of property taxes for Petition #377 Tina Maccarone v. Town of Thorndike on June 2, 2021 and asked if they could be approved.

**\*\*B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve the minutes from the appeal hearing Petition #377 Tina Maccarone v. Town of Thorndike on June 2, 2021.**

B. Arseneau said she is still transcribing the minutes from the Commissioners May 19, 2021 and June 2, 2021 court sessions.

(The Commissioners held deliberations on the adjourned June 2, 2021 tax abatement appeal hearing for Tina Maccarone vs Thorndike, which are in separate minutes.)

**COMMISSIONERS MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS**

The Commissioners stated that they had no further business.

**\*\*W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to adjourn the court session at 11:41 a.m. Unanimous.**

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