

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

## Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – October 20, 2016 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, October 20, 2016, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Carol L. Maines, Commissioner District #1, Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll (*left at 5:40 p.m.*), District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau, and Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves.

Budget Committee members present were: Nicholas Lapham, Bill Jones, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Shawn Levasseur, and Terry Pinto. *Committee members not present: Gerry Zwick.*

Also present were: Mark F. Hedrich, Chair of the Board of Supervisors of the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District; Esperanza Stancioff (*left at 5:59 p.m.*), Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service; MCEDD Board Chair John Shattuck (*left at 5:40 p.m.*); MCEDD Executive Director Jeff Kobrock (*left at 5:40 p.m.*); MCEDD Planning & Development Director Bill Najpauer (*left at 5:40 p.m.*), and Audra Caler-Bell, Assistant City Manager and Economic & Community Development Planner for the City of Rockland (*left at 5:40 p.m.*).

### Knox County Commission and Budget Committee Joint Meeting Agenda Commission Hearing Room Thursday – October 20, 2016 – 5:00 p.m.

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Approve Minutes** (Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
  - 1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of September 8, 2016
- III. 5:03 Election of Budget Committee Officers**
  - 1. Chair
  - 2. Vice Chair
  - 3. Secretary
- IV. 5:15 Public Hearing**
  - 1. Budget Committee Chair Opens Public Hearing on 2017 Proposed Knox County Budget
- VII. End of Public Hearing**
  - 1. Budget Committee Chair closes Public Hearing
- V. Joint Meeting with the Knox County Budget Committee for the Presentation of the Proposed 2017 Budget** (County Administrator Andrew Hart)
- VI. Budget Review**
  - 1. Midcoast Economic Development District (Pg 29)
  - 2. Knox-Lincoln County Extension Service (Pg. 29)
  - 3. Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water District (Pg 29)
  - 4. Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission (Pg 29)
  - 5. County Administration & IT (Pgs 8 & 9)
  - 6. District Attorney (Pgs 15 & 16)
  - 7. Debt Service (Pg 29)
- VIII. Adjourn**

#### **I. Meeting Called to Order**

The October 20, 2016 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Dorothy Meriwether and Commission Chair

Roger Moody at 5:04 p.m. Commissioner Moody reminded everyone that the meetings are streamed live and asked everyone to refrain from having side-conversations.

**II. Approve Minutes**

1. Quarterly Budget Meeting of September 8, 2016.

- Shawn Levasseur motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Nick Lapham seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 7 in favor (Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Nicholas Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Terry Pinto, Bill Jones and Lawrence Nash) and 1 abstention (Randy Stearns).
- Commissioner Richard Parent motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Carol Maines seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

**III. Budget Committee Election of Officers**

1. Chair:

- Dorothy Meriwether nominated Randy Stearns to serve as Budget Committee Chair for 2016. The nomination was seconded by Bob Duke. Randy declined the nomination.
- Lawrence Nash nominated Bob Duke to serve as Budget Committee Chair for 2016. Randy Stearns seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with 7 in favor (Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Nicholas Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Terry Pinto, Bill Jones and Lawrence Nash) and 1 abstention (Bob Duke).

2. Vice-Chair:

- Bill Jones nominated Shawn Levasseur to serve as Vice Chair for 2016. The nomination was seconded by Randy Stearns. A vote was taken with all in favor.

3. Secretary:

- Randy Stearns nominated Bill Jones to serve as Secretary for 2016. The nomination was seconded by Lawrence Nash. A vote was taken with all in favor.

**IV. Public Hearing**

The public hearing portion of the meeting commenced at 5:09 p.m. No members of the public chose to speak.

**V. Public Hearing Closed**

The public hearing was closed at 5:09 p.m.

**VI. Joint Meeting with the Knox County Budget Committee for the Presentation of the Proposed 2017 Budget.**

*The Commissioners and Budget Committee members introduced themselves:*

Commissioner	Carol L. Maines	District 1	Owls Head, Rockland, and South Thomaston, and Thomaston
Commissioner	Richard L. Parent	District 2	Cushing, Friendship, St. George, Union, Washington and Warren
Commissioner, Chair	Roger A. Moody	District 3	Appleton, Camden, Hope, Isle Au Haut, Matinicus Isle Plantation, North Haven, Rockport, Vinalhaven, and the unorganized territories of Criehaven and Muscle Ridge Islands
Budget Committee	Bob Duke, Chair	District 5	Rockport and Hope

Budget Committee	Nicholas Lapham	District 1	Isle Au Haut, Matinicus, North Haven, St. George and Friendship
Budget Committee	Dorothy Meriwether	District 2	South Thomaston, Vinalhaven and Owls Head
Budget Committee	Terry Pinto	District 3	Rockland
Budget Committee	Shawn Levasseur	District 3	Rockland
Budget Committee	Randy Stearns	District 4	Camden
Budget Committee	Lawrence Nash	District 6	Appleton, Union and Washington
Budget Committee	Bill Jones	District 7	Warren
Budget Committee	Gerald Zwick	District 8	Thomaston and Cushing

County Administrator Andrew Hart briefly mentioned some highlights in the proposed budget:

General Overview of the 2017 Proposed Budget

- The department heads began working on their budget drafts in August and submitted them to the County Administrator and the Finance Director, who then met with departments to review their budget drafts. The Commission met on September 29 with department heads to review the whole budget draft.
- The 2017 total budget shows a \$173,183 increase (2.39%) over the 2016 total budget
- The proposed COLA for 2017 is 0.7%.
- Anyone eligible under the wage plan for the 2% step increase will receive that in 2017.
- Health Insurance increase calculated at 10%
- Workers Comp and the Risk Pool are currently estimated at a 10% increase but the actual rates will be finalized in November

**VII. Budget Review**

**1. Midcoast Economic Development District (MCEDD)**

MCEDD Board Chair John Shattuck, MCEDD Executive Director Jeff Kobrock, MCEDD Planning and Development Director Bill Najpauer, and Rockland Assistant City Manager and Economic & Community Development Planner Audra Caler-Bell were all in attendance. Ms. Caler-Bell explained that she is a MCEDD board member and wanted to give some examples of projects that MCEDD has been helping with in the four municipalities in Knox County that are members of MCEDD (besides pursuing NBRC, EDA, and CDBG grant funding):

- Rockland: Assisted a marine services company in need of major repairs
- Camden: Provided about \$51,684 in environmental assessment services for the former tannery site
- Rockport: Assisted a business with getting grant funding to train workforce
- Thomaston: Assisted a business with a \$50,000 business loan

When asked what “clusters” are, Mr. Kobrock explained that MCEDD does research to determine the assets of the region, define which are most productive to leverage, and improve the existing assets rather than creating new assets.

Just like in the previous budget cycle, budget committee members asked the MCEDD representatives about the fact that if the County became a member of MCEDD, the four municipalities in Knox County that joined on their own would essentially be paying twice – first in the form of paying the town’s dues to MCEDD, and secondly in their County taxes. Mr. Kobrock felt that the cost the four municipalities would be paying in their taxes on top of their own dues was not enough to be a problem for anyone.

When asked if anything had changed since last year in terms of governance, the response given was to reiterate the list of projects in the four municipalities that MCEDD has been helping with. It was then clarified that only municipalities that have bought into MCEDD (or had their county buy in on their behalf) get any assistance from MCEDD or the ability to participate in MCEDD programs.

Commissioner Moody noted that he felt he should disclose the fact that he sits on the board for MCEDD and has been a supporter.

Commissioner Maines asked for Administrator Hart's opinion on funding MCEDD since he had put MCEDD's full request in the budget draft. Administrator Hart explained that he didn't have any recommendations and merely put all of the agency requests in there at 100% so that the Commission and the Budget Committee could see the effect on the overall budget and made their own decision.

The Commission was asked for its opinion on funding MCEDD. It was noted that last year the Commission supported funding MCEDD but was overruled by the Budget Committee. The Commissioners expressed support for economic development in Knox County. State statutes support economic development, and other counties have economic development expenditures in their budgets. It's a mechanism for counties to be able support their municipalities. Commissioner Parent added that he specifically was in favor of the County supporting MCEDD because the municipalities he represents are all towns that do not currently have access to MCEDD and would benefit if the County joins.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Midcoast Economic Development District's full budget request in the amount of \$25,206:**

In favor: 4 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham)  
 Against: 4 (Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)  
 Abstained: 0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Midcoast Economic Development District's full budget request in the amount of \$25,206:**

In favor: 3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

**2. Knox-Lincoln Counties Extension Service**

Knox-Lincoln Extension Educator Esperanza Stancioff handed out a document titled "K-L Counties Economic Impact 3.16" that summarized some of the projects that the Extension Service is working on. When asked how individuals gain access to services and whether they have to pay for them, Ms. Stancioff explained that individuals do not pay for services. People merely need to contact the Extension Service if they need access to expertise. Sometime programs offered by the Extension Service are funded by grants. The County only pays about 3.5% of the Extension's budget, and that really is just for the building, etc.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve Knox-Lincoln County Extension Services' budget request of \$57,042:**

In favor: 8 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve Knox-Lincoln County Extension Services' budget request of \$57,042:**

In favor: 3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

### **3. Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District**

KLSWD Board Chair Mark Hedrich gave everyone a “2016 District highlights” handout. The Conservation District does a lot of community outreach and technical assistance for conservation efforts such as erosion, culverts, drainage issues, water quality, etc. The Conservation District still has a partnership with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), which provides a lot of expertise. He briefly related a few services and projects. The 3% increase over last year’s request is just a cost of living increase.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water District’s budget request of \$27,473:**

In favor:	8 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water District’s budget request of \$27,473:**

In favor:	3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

### **4. Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission (MCRPC)**

Administrator Hart explained that MCRPC Executive Director Eric Galant was not present because the MCRPC annual meeting is the same night so he had told Mr. Galant to not worry about attending the budget meeting. He explained that MCRPC does work with EMA on the County’s Hazard Mitigation Plan, which covers all of the municipalities in the County.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission’s budget request of \$2,500:**

In favor:	8 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission’s budget request of \$2,500:**

In favor:	3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

### **5. Administration & IT**

Administrator Hart discussed some key points about the Administration and IT budget:

- Increased by \$11,925 (2%) over 2016 budget
- Increased the Labor Relations line by \$1,500 because both union contracts will be up for negotiation in 2017
- The Legal Fees line was kept at the same amount
- Internet Services & Web Hosting line increased to cover the cost of increasing the bandwidth and the cost of the Town Hall Streams service was moved into this line from the Office Supplies line (in Commodities), which lowered Office Supplies
- Computer Repairs & Maintenance was increased for the Spillman maintenance increase
- Computer Supplies & Equipment was lowered because purchases were made in 2016 that will not be needed to be purchased in 2017

- Capital includes \$8,185 for replacing the keyless door lock system at the Courthouse

There was a discussion about the cost of the HR consultant, which is currently in the budget at \$42,000 for 2017. When the Organizational Study was done in 2011, the executive assistant position was eliminated and an HR position be established at 40 hours. After that, at the recommendation of Administrator Hart, the Commission had voted to retain the services of the HR consultant (Laurie Bouchard) rather than hiring a County employee. Even though the Ms. Bouchard's services are \$100 per hour and is only in the Administrative Office one day (or one half day) per week, Administrator Hart felt that it cost less in the long run to have a part-time consultant than a full-time County employee. He also felt that Ms. Bouchard provided a level of professional services that could not be found in an employee if the County were to hire one. The Commission was asked to look at whether or not having a consultant vs. an onsite employee meets the needs of the employees and the County as a whole. Administrator Hart and Commissioners Maines and Moody voiced support for Ms. Bouchard and the work that she does for the County.

In response to questions asked about why the amount budgeted for GWI (internet) went up so much for 2017, Systems Administrator Mike Dean explained that the County is the first customer on Park Street requesting fiber cable (which has much greater internet speeds and capabilities) which means that the County has to pay for the cost of building out to the Public Safety Building. It needs to be done because the County has maxed out our capability on the copper lines. Systems Administrator Dean explained that he was able to get the cost to build out over 4 years instead of all in one year, or the 2017 amount would be a lot higher. The build-out needs to be done so that public safety staff will have the access they need.

After being asked if he had talked to the City of Rockland about their own build-out plans, Systems Administrator Dean made the following statement: "I wasn't even aware that they were...Rockland doesn't tend to be real forthcoming...with wanting to play nicely with anybody else. They like to go their own direction...they don't like to have to...share. And I don't mean to sound negative towards Rockland, I just...when you start getting multiple partners in...it changes the projects...and Rockland made their decisions before talking to anyone. So...as far as I know."

Commissioner Maines asked Administrator Hart if he knew whether anyone was actually viewing the meetings that Town Hall Streams is streaming live for the County. Administrator Hart said that he didn't know, but would find out and get the information to everyone at the next budget meeting.

The question was raised of why the Labor Relations is its own budget line instead of being included in the Legal Line but no answer was given.

Administrator Hart was asked about his budget summary write-up referencing a memo recommending 2017 wages for the Sheriff, Register of Probate, and the commissioners, but the Budget Committee did not have anything in their budget binders relating to the recommendation for the commissioners' stipends. Administrator Hart said that he did have a memo but hadn't provided it. He said that he would make sure the Committee had it for next week.

In response to the suggestion that if the commodities were being lowered significantly in each department to get the budget figures down to actuals implies that the County budgeted too high in 2016, Administrator Hart stated that this was not accurate. He noted that some expenses were moved between lines, or were one-time purchases in 2016 that will not happen in 2017, which lowers the budget in 2017. He stated that the departmental budgets were not budgeted too high for 2016 and said that departments are trying to make cuts every year, which is why the County's surplus isn't going up. He noted that he had instructed department managers to submit a budget draft with a zero increase. He felt that the department managers are frugal and were working hard to keep the budget increases low.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$492,171:**

In favor: 6 (Dorothy Meriwether, Bill Jones, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)  
 Against: 2 (Bob Duke, Terry Pinto)  
 Abstained: 0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$492,171:**

In favor: 3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

## **6. District Attorney**

DA Rushlau went over a few highlights from his budget:

- The District Attorneys around the state were informed that morning that they will all have to add \$800 to their 2017 budgets for firewalls (Computer Supplies & Equipment)
- The budget is up 2% over the 2016 budget (\$8,741)
- Computer Consultant line increased by \$2,300 to increase the number of MeDATS support staff
- Some of the line changes are washes, while some of the changes are just from either renaming , combining, or moving lines
- The JustWare in 2016 was a one-time expense so that reduced commodities in 2017
- Deferred Disposition decreased by \$1,000 because attorneys seem to be using this option for their clients less often

When asked about the caseload, DA Rushlau explained that the work load in Knox County is significant, but that the work load increase is less about number of cases and more about how much work is now required for each case due to technology changes. Each case now has a variety of media attached to it, like video from body cameras, etc. It creates a lot more material to process for each case.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$445,673 + \$800 for firewalls for a new total of \$446,473:**

In favor: 8 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$478,073 + \$800 for firewalls for a new total of \$446,473:**

In favor: 3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)  
 Against: 0  
 Abstained: 0

## **7. Debt Service**

Administrator Hart noted that 2017 will be year five of the debt service on the Public Safety Building. The amount of \$216,731 is \$3,401 less than the payment made in 2016. The amount of the payment goes down every year and will be completely paid off in 2027.

**A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$216,731:**

In favor:	8 (Dorothy Meriwether, Terry Pinto, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

**A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$216,731:**

In favor:	3 (Richard Parent, Roger Moody, Carol Maines)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

## **8. OTHER**

### Step 6 Bonuses

Administrator Hart was asked about the Step 6 bonus and how that works. He explained that it’s a one-time bonus that an employee on Step 16 receives at the end of the year if the person is eligible for it. The bonus is not added to the base pay for that employee. The bonuses are not guaranteed – their department manager has to make a recommendation to the County Administrator.

### Next Meeting – October 27

Administrator Hart recommended moving the review of the two building maintenance budgets from November 17 to October 27 since the DA budget was moved from October 27 to October 20. That will leave just Communications and the Airport on November 17, which should hopefully allow the Commission and Budget Committee to finish that night instead of needing the November 22 “as needed” date.

## **VIII. Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Randy Stearns to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Bill Jones. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Maines. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice S. Richards  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee & Knox County Commission approved these minutes at the next joint meeting on October 27, 2016.**