

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – October 27, 2011 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, October 27, 2011, 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 (*left at 5:31 p.m. and returned at 6:18 p.m.*), and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3. *Commission members not present: Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2.*

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Technical Support Specialist Mike Dean, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett (*left at 6:20 p.m.*), Finance Director Kathy Robinson, District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau (*left directly after his budget was reviewed*), and Probate Judge Carol Emery (*left at 6:20 p.m.*).

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Tina Plummer, and Elizabeth Dickerson. *Budget Committee members not present: Bill Jones, and Mason Johnson.*

Also present were: Eric Belléy, Vice President – Senior Business Relationship Officer of The First, NA; Dan Bookham, Executive Director of the Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce; Justin Holmes, Executive Director of the Maine Coast Economic Alliance; Roberta Smith, retired Camden Town Manager; Pat Finnigan, current Camden Town Manager; Kieran O'Dwyer, Operations Planning Manager, Supply Chain at FMC BioPolymer; and Tom Ford, Town Planner for the Town of Rockport.

Special Meeting – Agenda

Thursday – October 27, 2011 – 5:00 p.m.

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Ann Matlack for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Approve Minutes** (Chair Ann Matlack for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
 1. Minutes of Budget Review Meeting of October 20, 2011.
- III. 5:03 Election of Officers** (Budget Committee)
 1. Chair
 2. Vice Chair
 3. Secretary
- IV. 5:05 Budget Review**
 1. Maine Coast Economic Alliance/KWRED (pg. 28)
 2. Probate Court (pgs. 21-22)
 3. District Attorney (pgs. 14-15)
 4. Registry of Deeds (pgs. 23-24)
 5. Finance (pgs. 19-20)
 6. Administration and Information Technology (pgs. 9-10)
- V. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

The October 27, 2011 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Ann Matlack and Commission Chair Roger Moody.

II. Approve Minutes

1. Joint Budget Meeting of October 20, 2011.

Chair Ann Matlack asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

- Lawrence Nash motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Bob Duke seconded. A vote was taken with 7-0 in favor (Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Dickerson, Nash, and Stearns). The motion therefore passed.
- Commissioner Maines motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Moody seconded. A vote was taken with 2-0 in favor (Maines and Moody). The motion therefore passed.

III. Budget Committee Election of Officers

1. Chair:

Ann Matlack called for nominations for chair of the Knox County Budget Committee.

- Lawrence Nash motioned to table the voting of officers until the following meeting since only 7 of 9 Committee members were present. The motion was seconded by Randy Stearns. A vote was taken with 4 in favor (Stearns, Nash, Duke, Matlack) and 3 against (Meriwether, Dickerson, Plummer). The motion therefore passed.

IV. Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee for Review of the Proposed 2012 Budget.

Program Grants:

Maine Coast Economic Alliance (formerly known as KWRED)

Executive Director of the Maine Coast Economic Alliance Justin Holmes introduced himself. He explained that he had brought MCEA board members and advisors with him to the meeting:

Eric Belléy, Vice President – Senior Business Relationship Officer of The First, NA
 Dan Bookham, Executive Director of the Penobscot Bay Regional Chamber of Commerce
 Roberta Smith, retired Camden Town Manager
 Pat Finnigan, current Camden Town Manager
 Kieran O’Dwyer, Operations Planning Manager, Supply Chain at FMC BioPolymer
 Tom Ford, Town Planner for the Town of Rockport

Mr. Holmes gave a brief overview of some of the services that KWRED, now known as MCEA, has been performing for Knox County. Some of what he related included administering block grant assistance programs, offering grants and loans to businesses in the area, and working with the chambers of commerce.

Bob Duke expressed some concern about how local businessmen would have any idea that MCEA exists, or how they would know how to reach out to MCEA for help. He said that if he wasn’t on the budget committee he wouldn’t even know that MCEA existed. He asked how MCEA reaches out to people in the community. Several other Budget Committee members voiced similar concerns.

Mr. Holmes explained that the most notable way that MCEA makes their presence known is through the chambers of commerce.

Dorothy Meriwether expressed some concern over her belief that it seemed as though MCEA had changed their mission midstream, going from attracting new businesses to the area to focusing on just retaining the businesses that are already here. She found the switch in purpose to be very confusing. She also felt that a private business should be supporting itself and she was not sure why the County should be supporting private businesses. She said that she thought that MCEA’s purpose was to be actively going out and attracting businesses to this area rather than passively waiting for the phones to ring. Bob Duke said that he also struggled with MCEA’s change in purpose. He wasn’t convinced that if MCEA didn’t exist that the area would be unable to attract new businesses and retain its current ones. For MCEA to truly be successful, every local business needs to be aware that MCEA exists and what it does.

Mr. Holmes explained that MCEA did not change its philosophy but rather had a change in focus because of the status of the global economy. He receives calls from local businesses asking for advice on how to get help with hiring more workers, etc. He felt that by helping the existing employers stay fully staffed it sends a good message to potential employers thinking about coming here. MCEA still follows through with leads but it’s just not a climate where businesses are looking to relocate to this area. MCEA is raising awareness and doing their best to make businesses aware of programs and opportunities that are out there. He added that if the County chose to not support MCEA, he was not sure what message that will send to the private sector.

There was a brief discussion about why MCEA was asking for \$45,000 in funding from Knox County and yet had asked for nothing from Waldo County. Mr. Holmes explained that he had only just received an email from Waldo that morning about looking at supporting MCEA next year. Most of the effort takes place in Knox County anyway because Knox is the county providing the funding except for the City of Belfast.

5:31 p.m. Commissioner Maines left the meeting.

Randy Stearns said that he was feeling conflicted about whether or not to support MCEA. He explained that he was also serving on the Camden Budget Committee. Camden had not only recently hired an economic development director, but had also hired a new town manager who was, in part, selected because of her economic development experience. He did not understand why municipalities are hiring

economic directors if the county is also doing the same thing by supporting MCEA and other economic development agencies.

Roberta Smith explained that KWRED was developed to help towns whether they had an economic director or not. MCEA was not intended to take the place of what municipal leaders do in their own communities but rather to focus on what can be done regionally as a whole. Camden didn't hire an Economic Director because KWRED wasn't working; the purpose was to have someone at the town level to work with KWRED on specific projects within Camden's borders.

Straw vote:

Budget Committee

Lawrence Nash	\$40,000	would support a lesser amount
Elizabeth Dickerson	\$45,000	
Tina Plummer	Will support	Not sure how much
Bob Duke	\$45,000	
Ann Matlack	\$45,000	Maybe less?
Randy Stearns	Will support	Not sure how much
Dorothy Meriwether	?	Conflicted

Commission

Roger Moody	\$45,000
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Ann Matlack suggested that it might be worth having Mr. Holmes attend one of the quarterly budget meetings at some point in the year so that the Committee and Commission can keep up to date on what's happening instead of trying to hear it all in one meeting during budget season.

Departmental Budgets:

Probate Court

Administrator Hart explained that the big increase to the 2012 budget is health insurance and wages. Contractual and commodities are pretty much the same as 2011. Revenues total is up a little. The overall budget up about 7% over 2011 (about \$9,000).

There was a brief discussion about the Probate Judge's travel expenses, both current and past expenses and whether or not the County should be paying for it. Some other counties fund their judges to go to conferences to continue their legal and judicial education, but some counties require their judges to pay their own way.

- Consensus was that the group was comfortable with budget as is.

6:18 pm Commissioner Maines returned to the meeting.

6:20 p.m. Judge Emery and Register Hallett left the meeting.

District Attorney

Administrator Hart explained that the big increase to the 2012 budget is health insurance and wages. Contractual and commodities are pretty much the same as 2011. Revenues total is up a little. The overall budget is up \$18,000 over the 2011.

DA Rushlau mentioned that the firewall was a one-time cost and the reason it's not under the IT department is because it's unique to the department and as part of a network of four counties. After a couple Committee members expressed confusion about why this was not part of the IT budget, TSS Dean explained that the DA's office has their own need with this firewall that's separate from the rest of the County's departments. The DA's offices also all have their own IT support. They don't actually use the County's network and it has always needed to be completely segregated from the rest of the County's systems. The DA's also all use the same vendors for purchasing IT supplies and that's part of why it's kept separate.

- Consensus was that the group was comfortable with budget as is.

Registry of Deeds

Big increase is health insurance and wages. Contractual and commodities pretty much the same as 2011. Revenues total is up a little.

Register of Deeds Simmons thought it might be possible to increase the revenue figure a little (\$5,000). The consensus was to wait until more figures were in from October and then later in November look at increasing the number.

Commissioner Maines asked about overtime for the Deeds budget. It was commented that the Commission was unable to agree amongst themselves whether to put overtime back into the budget or not. Administrator Hart commented that he didn't feel that it was a good time to budget for possibilities when the County is looking at already having a much larger budget this year. He felt that if overtime was really needed that it could be funded from within the operating budget. There were some strong opinions for and against overtime in Deeds budget.

- Consensus was that the group was comfortable with budget as is.

Finance

Big increase is health insurance and wages. Contractual and commodities are pretty much the same as 2011. The total budget is up about \$9,000 over the 2011 budget.

Bob Duke asked what the overtime in the Finance budget pays for. Director Robinson explained that the overtime is for all the year-end work that has to be completed within a very tight period of time. The finance office has deadlines that have to be met at that time of year and the staff has to work extra hours at the end of the year to get everything done in time. The department has also taken on more responsibility and extra work due to the various studies undertaken in 2011, with more walk-in traffic than there used to be. The office is working on paying vendors electronically and 75% of employees get paid electronically instead of receiving paper checks. Eventually when there's an HR person some of the work load will be taken back off the department but in the beginning they will need to help the HR person get up to speed.

There was a discussion of the reasoning behind transferring money between budget lines during the budget year. Commissioner Moody explained that it's a responsible system because department heads cannot over-spend beyond the bottom line. If lines within the budget needs to run over, department heads are required to cut back spending in another line to cover it. In this system department heads have to comply with not overspending the budget and it is all reviewed with the finance director, administrator and the Commission.

County Administration and Information Technology

The big increase is health insurance and wages. Contractual is down because the computer consultant contract is about \$50,000 lower. Consultation fees is for having the HR consulting until the County's HR is on track and can hire someone to fill the position. Commodities are down.

Orthoimagery project

The State is working with towns and counties to do a GIS mapping system. It's a lot cheaper for the municipalities if the counties do it in conjunction with the state. That way the towns pay for it through their county tax assessment instead of the towns having to pay for it entirely on their own and the overall price is significantly lower for everybody.

The orthoimagery maps are useful for multiple reasons – ie: code enforcement, property assessing, measuring property, laying moorings, etc. It's more of a benefit to the towns than the county if the county does this so that the town doesn't have to pay for the entire thing themselves. If the county does this, the payments each year remain the same and the towns can get updated maps. The state already took the pictures but once a town or a county pays for it, they get a much higher resolution. Google Earth seems like a free option but it's outdated and does not have the resolution needed for many of the tasks that municipal employees need it to do.

The data is all given to municipalities on a server to look at and it will cut down on property disputes because you can look at a photo and measure it. You are buying into a service and it's automatically updated. Road signs, street lights, etc. can all be mapped out this way. It will prevent the town from having to pay a large cost every few years for a new fly-over. Even if the costs went back to the towns and counties instead of the state paying for it, it's still far cheaper than if everybody was paying for this all individually.

IT Capital Plan

The IT Capital Plan revolves around meeting the needs of the compensation study and organizational study. Both studies indicated that the County needs to be utilizing more technology and needs to be spending the money to catch up to where the County is supposed to be because the County has not been putting money into it each year. The next three years will have high amounts in the budget and then after that the County will be in maintenance mode so the costs will be much lower.

V. Adjourn

A motion was made by Bob Duke to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Lawrence Nash. A vote was taken with all in favor.

A motion was made by Carol to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice S. Richards
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their joint meeting on November 3, 2011.