

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Friday – October 3, 2014 - 9:00 a.m.

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Friday, October 3, 2014, at 9:00 a.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

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: Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop (*left at 10:53 a.m.*), EMA Director Ray Sisk, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll, District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau (*left at 10:03 a.m.*), Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves (*left at 10:53 a.m.*), Building Maintenance Supervisor Don Decker and Systems Administrator Mike Dean (*left at 10:03 a.m.*).

Others present included: Steve Betts of the *Bangor Daily News* (*left at 11:14 a.m.*).

Special Meeting – Agenda **Friday – October 3, 2014 – 9:00 a.m.**

- I. 9:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 9:01 Discussion Items**
 - 1. Review of the 2015 Knox County Budget Draft.
- III. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commission Chair Carol Maines called the special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 9:00 a.m.

II. Discussion Items

1. Discussion of Knox County 2015 Budget Draft.

Administrator Hart reminded everyone present that the budget being reviewed was just a rough draft and that the figures in the budget should not be considered the final budget. He briefly noted a few things about the first few pages of the budget before having the other staff relay information about their departmental budgets.

Page 4 Taxes and Fees:

This page doesn't include the Proposed State Valuation figures for 2015 because the State hasn't released them yet. In the meantime, the figures shown are the Certified 2014 figures. This means, however, that the tax assessments to the towns are not accurate and could change dramatically depending on the new valuation figures. The Dispatch fees are accurate because they're based on the budget.

Page 5 Tax Cap Calculations:

This page doesn't include the Average Real Personal Income Growth number for 2015 because the State Economist hasn't provided this figure yet.

Page 6 Tax Cap Effect on 2015:

This page is correct with the exception of the 2015 Property Growth factor, which the County is waiting on from the State Economist. The figure in red will increase once it's determined how much Surplus will be used to lower the budget.

Page 7 Administrative Summary:

This page shows a \$435,663 increase or 6.66%. This figure doesn't take into account using Surplus to lower the budget since that has yet to be determined. Wages and benefits are usually the major factor to the increases. There is also a decrease in Deeds revenue.

Personnel/Wages

Commissioner Moody asked why some of the step increases had the word "bonus" beside them. Administrator Hart explained that the wage plan makes an allowance for people who are on the highest Step in their Pay Grade to receive a bonus if they cannot get a Step increase. The Step increase for all budgets is proposed at the 2% Step increase, and a 1.6% COLA, for a total increase of 3.6%.

Administration and IT – Administrator Hart & Mike Dean

- This budget is up \$13,321 because of an increase in wages and benefits (total personnel services).
- Labor relations increased by \$3,000. One union has gone to mediation.
- Legal fees was lowered by \$10,000 to \$80,000.
- Mileage increased.
- Dues & registrations up \$500 because some dues are going up.
- Postage & shipping going up \$500 – the department has more FOA requests and the cost of doing certified mail adds up, especially if it's a lot of material being mailed out.
- Computer repairs and maintenance up a little mostly because of increases in costs with Spillman. The County has started conversations with the municipal PD's to start contributing to that but that has only just started to be discussed.
- Phone system – the County updated the system at the jail, airport, and the Public safety building. The courthouse hasn't been updated yet. The upgraded system will allow the telephone support system to remote in to take just a few minutes to fix a problem rather than sending out a tech that will charge us for an hour's worth of labor for something that took 5 minutes to fix.
- Employee recognition – the County wants to start recognizing years of service. There is also the plan in motion that will place a memorial bench out front of the Courthouse, which the Commission will discuss and vote on later.

Building Maintenance – Courthouse – Administrator Hart & Don Decker

- Budget is down \$5,544.
- Electricity cost is up.
- Building repairs and maintenance line down.
- Heating fuel and propane has been lowered a little bit because of the efficiencies that have been made. Heating fuel was locked in at \$3.11/gal for the 2014/2015 contract.
- Revenues - slight change in fuel reimbursement from the State but that's dependent on what the County spends for fuel.

Building Maintenance – Public Safety Building – Administrator Hart & Don Decker

- Budget is up a little over \$21,000 because an increase in electricity.
- Grounds maintenance is up about \$3,300 mainly for snow shoveling through contract with Farley & Son. It's a 24/7 facility so it's hard to anticipate costs.
- Building repairs and maintenance increased.
- Heating repairs and maintenance – had to set up maintenance contracts because warrantees have ended so there's an increase there. AAA now handles all County facilities and does not charge the County for materials like other companies would.

Deeds – Lisa Simmons

- Budget shows a total net increase of \$57,239, mostly because of the big decrease in Deeds fees.
- A few lines have gone down but a few others have gone up so it's kind of a wash

- Revenues are up from last year but it's lower than what was predicted for 2014.

DA – Geoffrey Rushlau

- Budget is up \$22,425.
- This is one of those budgets that really is a lean budget because it doesn't change much from year to year.
- The drug and analysis line has gone down. It has been declining each year.
- Paper cost has been going up every year so rather than purchasing books of statutes, the department has gone to the online research too.
- DA Witness advocate grant revenue is decreased because it was split among counties but one of the people doing it (Waldo County) was on social security and could only make so much with additional income, but she just resigned so now Waldo will be using more of the grant money than they had been.

EMA – Ray Sisk

- Contractual and commodities is down about 6%.
- Addition of copier line. Was previously split between two other lines so having them in one is a more accurate picture of what the department is doing.
- The addition of the Geospatial Database Manager in the personnel services is the major change. Right now the position is being paid for through grant funding and is not receiving any personnel services. She has been helping with the FEMA floodplain mapping. The towns are also needing maps that are less EMA-oriented like planning for subdivisions, culverts, hydrants, cemeteries, roads, tax maps, etc. It will need to be decided whether to have this position in EMA or the Admin/IT department but EMA has an ongoing need for mapping so Director Sisk felt the position should remain in his department. The position would do work on behalf of the towns per their request. The municipal officers from the towns suggested that 20 hours a week will probably not be enough but the County is starting with 20 just to see how it's going to go. If the position is in EMA, the "emergency" situations would take priority but if it's in the Administration department then maybe priorities will be different. The job description is designed for the position to remain in EMA. As long as it is kept in EMA and show its relevance to emergency planning, that keeps it eligible for EMPG funding. Dispatch uses the position a lot to help match maps for the 911 system to the CAD system. Deeds uses the position for when people want to see the map of a whole town. The Sheriff's Department and Airport might be able to use her as well. There might be the possibility of a revenue stream for towns outside of Knox or other counties that might want to use the service and pay a fee. The County has good Orthoimagery now and the GIS combines that with other layers of data like natural resources, etc. that makes everything so much more useful.

Probate – Elaine Hallett

- Budget is up \$1,775.
- Fees are projecting higher than 2014 budgeted figures.
- Printing is up slightly. Should eventually go paperless but nobody is really doing that yet.
- Microfilming is up slightly.

Patrol – Donna Dennison & Tim Carroll

- This budget is up \$100,365.
- Biggest increase is from the department looking to add another supervisor position. The department has had more than 10,000 calls for service so far this year and staff have been really busy. The plan is to promote someone from within to fill the third supervisor and then backfill the deputy position so there would still be 10 deputies.
- Compared the data for 2009 against 2014 so far and it's a 68% in calls for service already. Number of arrests have gone up 56% in the last 5 years. Mental health issues up 50%. Car stops for vehicle offenses up 113%. OUI arrests up 41%. Warrant arrests up 57%. Bail

violations arrests up 130%. The amount of work in patrol vs what is able to be accomplished needs to be addressed. The department is full-staffed right now but needs better coverage.

- Capital line is up. Last year forfeiture money was used to purchase one of the patrol cars but there isn't enough forfeiture money left to do the same thing in 2015.
- Civil process revenues down, in part because a deputy wasn't hired to fill the position until after the year had already begun.

Commissioner Maines asked Administrator Hart why he wouldn't support the new position. Administrator Hart said that he had seen the data that Chief Deputy Carroll had shared but that he wasn't completely convinced that a new position is needed. He noted that he agreed with having money in the budget for paying for all three vehicles because the forfeiture money will run out and there's no way to know when the County will get more.

Airport – Jeff Northgraves

- Budget is down by \$4,777 because of an increase of revenues that is more than the increase in expenditures.
- Includes \$65,000 for the County's share of the repairs on the runway (which is 5% of the total cost).
- The only difference between Airport Manager Northgraves' proposal and the Administrator's is the \$15,000 CIP money to replace the old grass cutting equipment that is not AIP eligible.
- Increase in the Administrative Assistant's hours from 32 to 36, which amounts to about an extra \$2,000 for 2015. Since upping her hours in 2014, the Airport has seen increases in revenue from parking fees and advertizing in the terminal.
- The County used to get money from MBNA every year of about \$100,000 put in reserves for the County's share of AIP projects, but that money is no longer coming in so now the County needs to start budgeting every year to fund its portion of the AIP projects.
- Cape Air is going to be paying towards the security so that will help offset the increase in security costs.

Communications – Linwood Lothrop

- This budget is down \$10,333 because of the reduction in Capital and the lease/purchase was paid off.
- ICMA line is about a 55% increase due to more employees deciding to participate in the retirement program.
- Telephone line is a \$1,000 decrease over last year. The department streamlined to get rid of some of the lines that were no longer needed when everything was moved into the new facility.
- Tower line up a small amount.
- Equipment line up \$3,800 in part because of a 1-time fee for a new UPS system (battery backup) that will support the communications center which is used when the power goes out so the Center can keep running. The Center has a new generator that will run for 48 hours but there's always the chance it won't start so that's why the UPS is needed.
- Maintenance line increase because of the I Am Responding system. The system auto-generates calls to responders and helps responders in the field by showing them who else is responding.
- 5-year capital plan: no capital projects were funded this year until the situation on the Ragged Mountain tower has been resolved. It's currently running with old antennas that are not working with the rest of the system and it's causing issues with coverage. The County may be able to use funds set aside for capital projects to replace the tower. The County has been having meetings with tower owner Mr. Foote. An engineer has visited the site and told Mr. Foote what needs to be done and the timeline for the repairs. In the meantime, Communications Director Lothrop has asked Bruce Marcus to look at Hatchet Mountain as a possibility should the need to arise, but he really didn't want to give up on Ragged Mountain. He said he'd rather either support Mr. Foote to replace/fix the tower, or put up our own.

Finance – Kathy Robinson

- This budget is up \$7,421.
- Contractual Services has also been decreased because of a reduction in the MUNIS contract and auditing services.
- Most of the increase is the personnel costs.
- Slight decrease in civil process costs.

Miscellaneous – Administrator Hart

Budget is down \$5,401 as the bond payment has decreased.

Grants:

- Knox-Lincoln County Extension Service has not asked for an increase.
- Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water District has asked for a \$1,800 increase.
- Midcoast Economic Development District asked for the total amount of \$28,491.
- Time and Tide has not sent in a request and the deadline for requests has passed.
- Mid-Coast Regional Planning Committee is asking for the same amount again.
- Restorative Justice Project requested \$15,000, and since it is a new request, it would increase the County budget total by \$15,000. They haven't requested money from any other counties. The organization uses volunteers to be the mentors but the money they want is to pay the people managing the program – it's to fund their salaries.

There was a brief discussion after Commissioner Moody suggested changing the heading of the "grants" in the budget so that everything except Restorative Justice is under some sort of economic development and planning label.

Risk Pool – This budget is \$1,629 based off of a budget estimate increase. The actual figure is usually received from the Risk Pool in November.

ICMA vs. MPERS – Administrator Hart explained that he didn't know yet how to budget for this yet because the County hasn't yet decided if it will make a change from ICMA to MPERS. The cost of making the change, if the County were to do so, isn't known yet either. Finance Director Robinson asked if the commissioners if they wanted to put a figure in the budget based on a guess of when the change might be made. Commissioners Moody and Maines both thought it was too aggressive to try to budget for the change from the start of the year. They thought maybe budgeting for a change starting July 1 instead might be better. Commissioner Parent suggested waiting until 2016 because the employees need time to make their decision about whether to stay with ICMA or change to MPERS. Finance Director Robinson said that the County couldn't rush the process anyway – if the Commission decides to do this, there will need to be a chunk of time to educate the employees. Administrator Hart noted that once he finally gets the information back, then he and Finance Director Robinson have to review it, the union has to review it, and then the Commission has to review it and vote on it. All of that, including the educating of the employees after the decision is made, all takes time. The consensus of the Commission was to hold off until at least July and see how things are progressing.

Surplus

Commissioner Moody asked Finance Director Robinson if she had some idea about the amount of surplus the County had currently because he felt that a budget draft showing an increase of 6.66% over last year's budget is misleading to members of the public since surplus is often used to bring down the bottom line. Finance Director Robinson said that the County was currently right where it needs to be with surplus so if the departments use up their budgets this year, the County won't be able to use more than \$100,000 of surplus to offset the budget. She reminded everyone that it had been discussed last year that the County would most likely not be able to keep up with using \$230,000 of surplus for the budget.

III. Adjourn

- A motion was made by Commissioner Roger Moody to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on November 10, 2014.