

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Special Meeting**

**Friday – October 4, 2013 - 9:00 a.m.**

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Friday, October 4, 2013, 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 (*arrived at 9:24 a.m.*), and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll, DA Administrative Secretary/Computer & Network Systems Administrator Kelly Leland (*left at 9:50 a.m.*), Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley (*left at 9:50 a.m.*), Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, and Systems Administrator Mike Dean.

Others present included: Building Maintenance Supervisor Don Decker.

## **Special Meeting – Work Session – Agenda Friday – October 4, 2013 – 9:00 a.m.**

- I. 9:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 9:01 Discussion Items**
  - 1. Discussion of Knox County 2014 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 9:06 a.m.

### **II. Discussion Items**

#### **1. Discussion of Knox County 2014 Budget Draft.**

Administrator Hart gave a brief overview of the budget process thus far and listed some key points:

- Total budget for 2014 is currently \$6,789,015, not including the overlay.
- Overlay is currently calculated at 1.5% since that's what was done for the 2013 budget but it could be changed back to the traditional 2%.
- Some departments are up minimally, mostly just because of the wage increases.
- Administration & IT is up because of legal since the Commission asked that the true cost of legal be shown rather than taking legal costs out of reserve. The legal budget covers all of the departments but is in the administration budget. Took an average of the actual from 2008 to 2013 and put \$90,000 in the 2014 budget.
- The Dispatch assessment is up some. Communications budget is up a little bit because of the new tower and an increase in maintenance contracts.
- Page 6 - Tax Cap for 2014 shows the property growth factor for 2013 at 1.48%. Even without using surplus, the budget is under the tax cap.
- A 2% CPI was originally put in the budget along with a 2% Step increase. Elected officials, except for the commissioners, received just the CPI since they're not in the wage plan. When

the August CPI came out at 1.5%, the 2% in the budget was replaced with 1.5%. The budget now shows a 1.5% CPI and 2% step increase.

- It's getting more and more difficult to make cuts out of the departmental budgets. May have to look at cutting staff. He felt the Commission understood that the departments are doing their best to keep their budgets down, but he wasn't sure the Budget Committee understood that.

#### Building Maintenance – Courthouse – Administrator Hart & Don Decker

- Lowered grounds maintenance line to have it more accurately reflect actual costs.
- Depending on the winter there might be extra snow removal. It can be difficult to budget.
- Lowered repairs and maintenance lines to reflect actual costs and because of improvements on the boiler and other improvements or repairs to the building.
- Heating fuel lowered a little bit. The building used a little less this spring than last year.
- Still have a few more windows to fix in 2014.
- A lot of controls have been worked on to fix the heating/cooling system during this year. From here on out it will save money.
- No capital in the budget. There's one project left, the external trim painting, but that's coming out of reserve in 2014. Some brick re-pointing needs to be done on the courthouse, especially on the front side near Probate (already did the backside). It will most likely have to be done in phases over the next few years because it's expensive. An estimate was done and it was somewhere around \$20,000 to \$30,000 per side of the building. The front side should be a lot cheaper since there's more granite than brick. The County will probably will go out to bid for that in 2015.

#### Building Maintenance – 301 Park Street – Administrator Hart & Don Decker

- Added an equipment repairs and maintenance line because the warranties on the building will be up.
- Heating fuel line increased to reflect actual cost. The budget for this in 2013 was an estimate based on what Village Soup had been spending when they occupied the building, plus the fact that it was becoming a 24/7 facility.
- Cleaning contract amount wasn't correct in the 2013 budget because the County had gone out to bid for that after the budget was already set.

#### DA – Shane Riley & Kelly Leland

- 1% increase overall.
- Several items and lines were cut, including the overtime line. Overtime usage was up in 2013 largely for the restitution project so that won't be necessary in 2014.
- Drug analysis line is difficult to predict but the trend seems to be that it's on the rise. It's out of your control how many drugs will need to be tested.
- Computer consultant line is down. All of the DA's computer purchases are done through a bulk-purchasing rate on a 3-year rotation through an IT consultant company. That company handles services for all DA's offices in the state.
- Superior Court and District Court witness fees have been going up.
- Offices supplies and equipment going down. The office needed some larger purchases in 2013, but there shouldn't be any large purchases in 2014 so that line has been lowered.
- DA Rushlau is exploring an online research program to try and keep the books and subscriptions costs down since the cost of printed materials keeps getting more expensive.

- The State has restructured the witness advocate grant. The grant is down overall. It's going to affect Knox by \$1,000. The State has restructured the program and changed the way counties apply for it. It has become a competitive process and each county is competing for the funds.

#### EMA – Ray Sisk

- A budget line for a tower rental for \$3,300 has been added to Contractual. The tower only covers the EMA communications now so it seemed wise to remove it from the Communications budget and put it in the EMA budget where 50% of the costs get reimbursed.
- Small decrease in phone lines from restructuring the way the accounts were set up. Need to work with FairPoint some more to see if that could be reduced lower.
- Decrease in costs with the new copier since the department no longer has to buy toner.
- EMPG programs have been going up in terms of available funds so staff are working on finding more grants to help offset costs.

#### Probate – Elaine Hallett

- Overall budget up 1%.
- Probate fees are up.
- New filing system is working well. Older files have been moved to the storage room/vault by Deeds to make room for newer files in the Probate vault.

#### Deeds – Lisa Simmons

- Budget down because of the new fees starting next Wednesday.
- Maintenance contract for one of the machines is no longer needed so that decreased the amount in that line.
- Will no longer be paying for the internet in 2014 because of the new vendor (IQS) that will start working with the department before December when the current contract with the current vendor (ACS) expires.
- Reduced the website revenue because no one has any idea how the new law will effect website revenues. The new law means that the first 500 copies will be free per calendar year per person if accessing the documentation themselves on the website. There is a concern that people will use the website rather than \$1 if they do it in the Deeds office.
- Staffing level is working out well. Everyone is busy.

#### Patrol – Donna Dennison & Tim Carroll

- Biggest expense for civil service is the mileage reimbursement. Decided to use one of the department's current 4-cylinder cars and hire someone for 25 hours a week to do the bulk of the civil service and bring the money for service fees in to the department.
- Using forfeiture funds to help pay for vehicles instead of budgeting for all three vehicles.
- Overtime kept the same. Shifted the schedules of the lieutenant and chief deputy to help cover shifts instead of paying deputies to work overtime shifts.
- Calls are up this year, in part because the State Police are no longer covering one of the three county zones. This change was because of because communication problems with information and data and because the State Police barracks were removed from Thomaston (they're now out of Augusta) so they were often elsewhere and the deputies ended up doing the coverage anyway.

- Arrests are up 20%. Calls for alarms are up 20%. OUI's are about the same. More fatalities from crashes this year. Burglaries are down (almost half of last year) because of all the property checks that the deputies are doing. The deputies are busy and they like the work.
- The new space at 301 Park Street is helping with efficiency. The staff are no longer crowded and are proud to show it off to the public.
- Cell phone service companies were reviewed to see if there was a better deal elsewhere and it worked out that US cellular was still the best cost for cell phones, and Verizon was the best for the aircards that allow laptops to connect to the internet from the cruisers.
- Last year Wright Express gas cards wouldn't have saved the department any money but this is being looked at again for 2014. The budget line for gas wasn't changed since it's not known whether there will be savings. This will be done countywide for any department vehicle.

#### Airport – Jeff Northgraves

- The biggest issue is not expenses – it's the revenues. The revenues have still not gone back to what they used to be because of the economy.
- TSA completely changed how they reimbursed the County even though their requirements stayed exactly the same, if not got more strict. The County was cut about \$105,000 in reimbursement. Security used to be at a steady state and there was a color coding that affected the level of security. When the color-coding was done away with, the steady was already at a higher level; however, even though the airport is at a higher level of security, the TSA cut our funding. They cut the dollar amount per hour and also the number of days reimbursed. This will have a huge impact on the airport's budget for 2014. A letter was sent to Senator King's office a few months ago asking for help with this but there has been no response yet. The only way to prevent this from having a huge impact on the budget is to completely change the way the County handles security. The County will only get \$43,000 in reimbursement. Surplus won't be able to cover the lack of reimbursement funds.
- Increasing the administrative assistant's hours permanently from 28 to 32. The results from the trial run of her temporary increase in hours during 2013 went exactly as predicted.
- Contractual services down 2% (mostly electricity).
- Commodities up a little bit, mostly because of automobile and equipment – the gas was moved from contractual to commodities.
- \$10,000 in capital costs. The airport is going to have to buy some lawn cutting equipment because the older equipment is just getting too old.
- Did not put anything in the budget for the AIP projects for 2014 but will have to for 2015 and each year after that.

#### Communications – Linwood Lothrop

- Overtime budget increased by \$10,000 to meet current spending trends. Been most of the year without a supervisor. Down two dispatchers right now. Had a lot of major incidents in 2013 that required extra coverage including storms, fairs, festivals, seat belt enforcement, OUI enforcement, etc.
- Telephone line lowered. Met with the FairPoint rep when the department moved to 301 Park Street and were able to save \$2,500 for 2014.
- Going to NextGen 911 system in March, which will allow access to IP lines. The IP lines may allow the department to use less telephone lines, which would then lower expenses in 2015.
- Tower rentals reduced by \$5,400 because the Lenfest tower equipment was moved to Coggins Hill, and all that's left on the Lenfest tower is the EMA equipment, which is why the expense for that tower was moved to the EMA budget.

- Training line decreased. There had been an increase in 2013 due to some county-wide training that will not be happening in 2014.
- Medical exams line was increased now that psychological and polygraph exams are done for all new hires.
- 3% increase on copier line. Working towards getting a buyout figure to get out of the current contract so the department can participate with the rest of the County's departments in Administrator Hart's effort to have one vendor.
- Radio repairs and maintenance increased because the maintenance contracts increased due to the increase in infrastructure on the tower sites.
- Maintenance Agreement line increased. The generator maintenance contract is for \$1,800 for the generators on the towers. It's cheaper to have them maintained by one company for all of the sites.
- There are 4 Capital items. The radio infrastructure that is the last payment so that line will disappear in the 2015 budget. "I Am Responding" notifies agencies of incidents in multiple ways and the Spillman software communicates with that. The remote IP Antenna Monitor System monitors the system and alerts staff to problems before anyone would realize there were any problems. The three items/lines will be paid out of undesignated funds (Communications surplus) so it won't actually affect the budget. This is why the Administrator's proposal does not have the amounts listed in his column.
- This budget was approved by both the KRCC Executive Board and the Advisory Committee before it was presented to the Administrator.
- In the future, the County will be working towards each tower having multiple microwaves so there are backups if one goes down. It fortifies the communications structure. There are also still some dead spots in the county, one of which is the pearl street area in Camden. To help correct this, the County would be looking at putting a tower on Hatchet Mountain, which would also serve as a backup for Ragged Mountain. Ragged Mountain constantly has issues, including very difficult accessibility, especially in the winter, and trees keep falling on things. The communications consultant backs this direction but the County just can't afford it this year.

#### Administration and IT – Administrator Hart & Mike Dean

- The increase in the legal line was discussed earlier in the meeting.
- Will be asking to take more from surplus than in 2013, which will partly offset the increase in the legal line.
- Driving force behind legal is the three unionized departments (Communications, Patrol, Jail) because of their grievances, and also the airport if there are any accidents like there was this year.
- Will be cutting legal counsel's help out of labor relations since the contracts have already been overhauled

#### Finance – Kathy Robinson

- Last year the cost of attending a Munis conference increased the travel and training lines but that's not happening this year so all those lines are reduced.
- Using a table-top printer and old EMA copier right now but will be going with a copier lease like the rest of the departments. The cost of that will be offset by not having to buy toner and other supplies for the old printer and old copier.
- Health trust has been great in helping filter the information coming in on the Obama Care but we've been spending a lot of time on this. There have been a lot of employee questions about

it. We'll also be having a change in health care plan which will mean meetings and a lot of paperwork. Finance staff will be extremely busy in December and January, which is already a busy time of year for the staff.

Miscellaneous – Administrator Hart

- Bond interest is down \$16,422.
- Increased the TAN a little bit.
- The Program Grant amounts in the Administrator column reflect what the agencies received in the 2013 budget with the exception of MCEDD since last year they had asked for half of their usual amount.
- Insurance for risk pool figured about a 3% increase for 2014.
- Going to put \$230,000 surplus towards the budget in the draft so the budget committee will see we're looking at that

**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 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on November 12, 2013.**