

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Thursday – October 9, 2014 - 2:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Thursday, October 9, 2014, at 2:00 p.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: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Jail Administrator John Hinkley, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Deputy Register of Probate Julie Allen, Deputy Treasurer Barbie Sylvester, Systems Administrator Mike Dean and Building Maintenance Supervisor Don Decker.

Others in attendance: Clerk of Courts Eileen Bridges; Elizabeth Simoni from Maine Pretrial Services; and Todd Butler from Maine Pretrial Services.

Special Meeting – Agenda **Thursday – October 9, 2014 – 2:00 p.m.**

I. 2:00 Meeting Called To Order

II. 2:01 Discussion Item

1. Discussion with Knox County Courthouse Staff, Clerk of Courts, and Judicial Marshals Regarding the Future Use of the Vacant EMA Offices' Space.

III. Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commission Chair Carol Maines called the special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. Discussion Items

1. Discussion with Knox County Courthouse Staff, Clerk of Courts, and Judicial Marshals Regarding the Future Use of the Vacant EMA Offices' Space.

Administrator Hart explained that in June the Commission had discussed renewing the existing Maine Pretrial Services (MPS) contract. At the same time, the counties of Knox, Lincoln, Waldo, and Sagadahoc, had started discussing doing a joint contract with MPS. He said that Todd Butler of MPS had approached him to ask about available space in a county facility to see if there was a way to lower the County's jail budget. It has to be approved by the Commission if they are going to use the EMA space. The approval of MPS using the space had been put that on hold while the four counties were discussing having a contract together. He said that Mr. Butler had recently asked if the space was still available so this meeting was scheduled in order to both present information and give everyone the opportunity to ask questions. The Commission will vote on the use of the space and give authorization to sign the contract next week. The contract would be for 9 months with an option to renew for 2 years.

MPS' offices are currently located in the Breakwater Marketplace building in Rockland. Mr. Butler didn't know how much square feet MPS needed but said that the EMA offices space is more than adequate. It is estimated that there will be a minimum of two MPS staff in the office every day, but no more than four. There is no space in the jail for MPS and there is the issue of security there because the risk of contraband being snuck into the jail could increase.

The County will not get any credit or money back for the savings achieved from housing MPS in the courthouse. The cost of the office space is included in the contract price so if the County provides MPS with office space, then MPS will lower the contract price. All four counties participating in the joint

contract are agreeing to provide MPS with office space. Elizabeth Simoni explained that currently MPS is paying an estimated \$10,812 per year in rent and utilities. It is estimated that there will be a \$14,532 savings for Knox if the new contract is approved for 9 months if MPS is using County-owned space instead of renting elsewhere. MPS traditionally does their own janitorial including taking out their own trash. MPS will need access to bathrooms to do urine analysis. Building Maintenance Supervisor Don Decker stated that MPS will utilize the bathroom across from the building maintenance office that has three stalls and is not a public bathroom so is rarely used.

There was some concern about people being able to get down to the old EMA offices because of the narrow hallway. The hallway is 32 inches and it has to be 36 minimum for a wheelchair to go through. Ms. Simoni indicated that anyone with physical limitations could meet with MPS staff at some other location. Everyone else will go through the main entrance, go through entry screening, and then take the stairs down to the ground floor. Signs will need to be put up directing MPS clients to the offices on the ground floor, but it was noted by several meeting attendees that no matter how many signs you put up, people don't always read them and will still wander around because they can't figure out where to go. Some employees were concerned about having the "criminal element" back in this part of the courthouse.

Another concern was the issue of parking because MPS staff will need places to park, not to mention their clients coming to the courthouse to meet with them. On jury selection days or busy court days, the both parking lots are full. Mr. Butler explained that while a lot of clients will be coming to MPS, they don't all show up at once. For MPS staff, most of the time only two will be at the courthouse on a daily basis. There are currently two employee spaces that are empty because of EMA moving to the new Public Safety Building. There are also three public parking spaces, but those are usually taken if the courts are busy or when there are meetings going on at the courthouse. Mr. Butler didn't believe parking would be too much of an issue because he said a lot of their clients use taxis. They don't all show up at once so he estimated that there might be a couple of vehicles parked each hour.

The issue was raised that housing MPS in the courthouse doesn't save the County money because it won't change how much the County pays for the jail. It lowers the amount the State has to pay towards the jail's budget. It was also noted that the County can't use jail resources for the rest of the County, but this would mean the jail using County resources. It was also noted that when the County has a tenant renting space in the courthouse, the County gets the revenue, but that wouldn't happen in this case so it's an unusual situation.

The bulk of the supervision meetings of MPS staff with their clients take place on Tuesday and Thursday but MPS will be in the office every day because there are clients that come in on the other three days. The office hours would be 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. since that's when the courthouse is open. If the contract is signed by the Commission, MPS felt they could be moved in within 30 days.

Break Room

Administrator Hart explained that originally the old EMA offices had been considered for use by the courthouse staff as a break room. If MPS ends up using that space, there is another room nearby that is currently being used for storage. The storage room is too small for MPS' use, so it would be better to use it as the break room. All that will need to be done to the storage room to make it usable as a break room is to paint the walls after the equipment being stored in there is removed, and then moving the appliances in the old EMA kitchen area to the new room.

The Commission will vote at their regular Commission meeting on October 14th on whether to allow MPS to use the old EMA office space, as well as whether or not to approve the 4-county contract.

III. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant

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