

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – November 12, 2009 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 12, 2009, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The executive assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Anne Beebe-Center, Commissioner District #1, and Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3 (joined the meeting by conference call).

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Executive Assistant Constance Johanson, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Sheriff Donna Dennison, and Chief Deputy Ernest McIntosh.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Sid Lindsley, Dorothy Meriwether, Bill Jones, Elizabeth Dickerson, and Jim Bowers.

Others present were: Lawrence Nash of Union, Timothy Carroll, Reginald Walker, Alan Hinsey and George Terrien from EMDC, and Steve Betts, reporter from *The Herald Gazette*.

Special Meeting – Agenda Thursday – November 12, 2009 – 5:00 p.m.

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Ann Matlack for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Vote to Approve New Member to the Knox County Budget Committee** (Chair Ann Matlack for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center for the Knox County Commission)
 1. To Fill Vacancy of District #8 (Representing Cushing and Thomaston)
- III. 5:03 Approve Minutes** (Chair Ann Matlack for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center for the Knox County Commission)
 1. Minutes of Budget Review Meeting of October 29, 2009.
 2. Minutes of Budget Review Meeting of November 5, 2009.
- IV. 5:05 Final Vote on all Department Budgets** (*in preparation for Public Hearing*)
- V. 6:30 Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Budget Committee Chair Ann Matlack called the Budget Committee meeting to order and Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the November 12, 2009 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 5:00 p.m.

II. Vote to Approve New Member to the Knox County Budget Committee

The Town of Thomaston recommended A. Mason Johnson to fill the District #8 seat on the Knox County Budget Committee. The Town of Cushing recommended Carolyn Ahlstrand to fill the District #8 seat on the Knox County Budget Committee. Budget Committee Chair Ann Matlack asked the budget committee to nominate a candidate to represent District #8.

- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve the appointment of Carolyn Ahlstrand to represent District #8 on the Knox County Budget Committee. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Dickerson.

Ann Matlack asked if there were any other recommendations. Bob Duke asked if anyone knew Ms. Ahlstrand and could give a brief biography. He commented that he had some concern that the Ms. Ahlstrand had not attended any of the meetings. It was noted that the committee was voting on seating a candidate to fill the remainder of Bart Virgie's term, which ends December 31, 2010. Dorothy explained that she nominated Ms. Ahlstrand because she seemed interested enough to contact the selectmen and volunteer to serve.

- A was taken on the motion to approve the nomination of Carolyn Ahlstrand with five in favor and two opposed (Sid Lindsley and Bill Jones).

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the appointment of Carolyn Ahlstrand to represent District #8 on the Knox County Budget Committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

III. Approve Minutes

Ann Matlack reported that there were two sets of minutes to be approved. She had a comment on the October 29th minutes and asked if the November 5th had been completed. The November 5th minutes were complete as to the content of the three departments that were reviewed. The section relating to the further review of the communication budget was summarized. Chair Matlack called for a motion and a second to approve the minutes of October 29th for discussion.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke.

Ann Matlack reported that Rodney Lynch works for the City of Rockland and is involved in community development. The wording on page 6, fifth paragraph needs to be changed. It should read “Rodney Lynch is a planner for the City of Rockland and focuses on obtaining grants for local community development.”

- A vote was taken to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2009 meeting as amended with six in favor. Jim Bowers abstained because he did not attend the meeting.

The approval of the November 5th minutes was postponed.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the minutes of the October 29, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center. A vote was taken with two in favor. Commissioner Roger Moody abstained because he had not read the minutes.

IV. Final Vote on all Department Budgets *(in preparation for Public Hearing)*

County Administrator Andrew Hart explained that he e-mailed out a spreadsheet put together by Kathy Robinson showing yearly expense amounts and one-time expenses that were added into the budget. Some items were moved to different lines for consistency throughout the budget. For example the chair and printer were moved from the capital line to the office equipment line in the District Attorney’s budget.

Copies of the updated budget were available. Mr. Hart reported that he had contacted three companies to get an estimate on the compensation and benefit study and the organizational study as suggested. One company estimated the cost to do an organization study to be \$45,000.00 and \$20,000.00 for compensation and benefit study. The commissioners approved the amounts for the studies at their regular meeting, which are included in the revised budget. The consensus was to do the organization study.

Departments

Building Maintenance – page 9

Ann Matlack asked if the cost for the boiler replacement was put in the proposed 2010 Building Maintenance budget. The boiler replacement project was postponed because the size of the boiler had not been determined.

- A motion was made to approve the Building Maintenance budget in the amount of \$448,645.00 by Jim Bowers and seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Bob Duke suggested that the commissioners use the grant money, if and when it is received, to replace as many windows as possible as well as the re-pointing of the brick work.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if the commissioners needed to approve the proposed budget at this time.

- A motion was made to approve the Building Maintenance budget in the amount of \$448,645.00 by Commissioner Richard Parent and seconded by Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center. *(No vote was taken at this time).*

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that he did not have a budget proposal with him, but did not object to votes being taken. The purpose of taking votes is to prepare a final budget for the public hearing. It was decided that the commissioners would wait until the end and vote on the bottom line amount.

Executive Office – page 12

Ann Matlack commented that there was a discussion on whether to add in funds for a benefit and compensation and an organization study. The net total for the proposed budget for 2010 is \$555,781.00.

Bill Jones suggested eliminating \$35,000.00 from the bottom line. This includes \$20,000.00 for compensation study and benefit study and reducing the amount for the organization study by \$15,000.00.

- A motion was made to approve the Executive Office budget in the amount of \$555,781.00 by Dorothy Meriwether and seconded by Sid Lindsley.

Bob Duke commented that the public safety record management server and the wireless network should be taken out. He did not consider these two items to be critical. The organizational study either needs to be funded for the full amount of \$45,000.00 or not done at all.

Dorothy Meriwether asked if the commissioners had the authority to move funds from one department to another as in the case of having a savings on the benefit and compensation study and move it to another department to fund a position. The answer was no. Funds can only be moved within a department.

The public safety record management server and the wireless network server projects were recommended by the IT director. It was noted that the IT director had also commented that if the projects were taken out of the 2010 budget, he would find a way to manage and the projects could be funded next year. The purpose of the projects was to take care of the fragmented method of storing data and to address the issues of the wiring in the old section of the courthouse.

Jim Bowers suggested that there should be some funding to get the projects started and recommended putting \$20,000.00 in the budget.

Bob Duke commented that he did not support this proposal because the bottom line was up 20 percent.

Mr. Hart explained that the total cost of the public records management server was \$46,000.00 with \$16,000.00 coming from a grant. The county's share is the \$30,000.00. This server would manage the data from the laptops in the patrol vehicles as well as data from the jail. The wireless network for the courthouse could be postponed for a year.

- An amended motion was made to approve the Executive Office budget in the amount of \$518,281.00, which is taking \$37,500.00 out (\$20,000.00 for the compensation study and \$17,500.00 for the wireless network) by Dorothy Meriwether and seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with six in favor and one opposed (Bob Duke).

Registry of Deeds – page 15

There was no discussion.

- A motion was made to approve the Registry of Deeds budget in the amount of -\$146,250.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Jim Bowers. A vote was taken with all in favor.

District Attorney's Office – page 18

The budget proposal includes a chair and a printer.

- A motion was made to approve the District Attorney's budget in the amount of \$329,122.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Jim Bowers. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Emergency Management Agency – page 21

The budget proposal includes the removal of the \$10,000.00 earmarked as the Allowance for New Building Costs.

- A motion was made to approve the Emergency Management Agency's budget in the amount of \$54,025.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Finance Office – page 24

The cost for the accounting software, which had been funded by a computer reserve account, was moved into the proposed finance budget for 2010.

- A motion was made to approve the Finance Office budget in the amount of \$191,198.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Probate Court – page 26

There was no discussion.

- A motion was made to approve the Finance Office budget in the amount of \$127,228.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Elizabeth Dickerson. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Sheriff's Office – page 29

Sheriff Dennison requested an additional deputy. Other changes include \$33,930.00 for office equipment, portable radios, and a patrol vehicle.

Bob Duke commented that there is not 24-hour law enforcement coverage throughout the County. There are seven deputies assigned to the mainland and two assigned to two of the island communities. It appears there is a critical need for another position. As to the vehicles, \$26,000.00 is in the budget to pay for one vehicle and there are other funds available to purchase two additional vehicles if necessary.

Elizabeth Dickerson agreed that there were too few officers for the geographical area. She remarked that there was an organizational study proposed that may determine that more officers are needed, or not.

Jim Bowers suggested funding the position for half a year in order to have the organizational study done first. It was noted that the sheriff's budget is up only one percent over last year's budget.

- A motion was made to approve the Sheriff's Office budget in the amount of \$1,392,587.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Bill Jones. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Debt Service – page 35

There was no discussion. The proposed funding is for the Tax Anticipation Note (TAN).

- A motion was made to approve the Debt Service budget in the amount of \$30,000.00 by Jim Bowers and seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service – page 36

A zero increase was proposed. It was suggested that funding this and other similar organizations would be discussed further at a quarterly budget committee meeting.

- A motion was made to approve the Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service budget in the amount of \$54,570.00 by Dorothy Meriwether and seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with six in favor and one opposed (Sid Lindsley).

Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District – page 36

A zero increase was proposed. Questions were raised during the budget process as to why the County contributes money to this and other organizations. One explanation was that the organizations provide regional services. It was noted that water and soil conservation issues do not stop at town or county boundaries. Mr. Hart suggested the commissioners meet with the various organizations to determine the County's mission and/or obligation contribute to the support of the organizations.

- A motion was made to approve the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District budget in the amount of \$19,421.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Elizabeth Dickerson. A vote was taken with five in favor and one opposed (Sid Lindsley). Bill Jones abstained.

Program Grants – page 36

The Program Grants budget includes funding for Eastern Maine Development, Time & Tide RC&D, Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission, and KWRED.

- A motion was made to approve the Program Grants budgets in the amount of \$16,170.00 by Jim Bowers and seconded by Bill Jones. The motion excludes funding for KWRED in the amount for \$70,000.00.

Sid Lindsley commented that he had a problem with this suggestion. There are two more years before the economy is expected to turn around. Something needs to be done and by cutting funding for an economic development agency in the area lowers the chances of the County attracting businesses, jobs, and money to the area. Some funding needs to be allocated to economic development.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that economic issues cross county boundaries. KWRED is one way to pursue economic development whether it is funded by the towns, the County or as a combined effort. Economic development issues have been addressed at the town level, but it also needs to be approached on a regional basis.

Jim Bowers commented that economic development agencies assist businesses already in the resource area with their infrastructure in place. Nothing is done for the rural areas. Residents of the rural areas have to commute to work. KWRED is proposing paying \$70,000.00 for one person to work half time.

Bill Jones asked if the committee was voting on the bottom line for the four agencies. The answer was yes, but it was noted that there were four lines with a dollar amount proposed for each of the agencies listed under the program grants section. The commissioners can move the amounts around within this section. Mr. Jones suggested that the commissioners could decide what amount should go toward economic development.

Kathy Robinson commented that she believed that each line had to be voted on individually because they were separate entities. Mr. Hart agreed, noting this was not the time to cut an agency out.

Eastern Maine Development Corp.

- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve \$10,000.00 for Eastern Maine Development Corp. There was no second.
- A motion was made Bill Jones not to fund Eastern Maine Development Corp. The motion was seconded by Jim Bowers.

Mr. Jones explained that he supported economic development, but his motion was made because he did not see any results from the previous funding of \$20,000.00 to get someone to work on economic development at the local level.

Commission Roger Moody commented that he supported economic development with the County playing an important role. KWRED appears to be expensive and it was difficult to determine the amount of money that should be allocated to support the economic development agencies. EMDC was the conduit for obtaining small business loans and probably should have some monetary support. He suggested \$10,000.00 for EMDC and \$40,000.00 for KWRED.

Jim Bowers commented that EMDC has to service Knox County even if it was decided not to fund the agency. Most businesses are self started and are not helped by the economic development money. Many of the grants coming into the area are for developing alternative energy sources.

Many of the rural towns do not support industries moving into their towns. The consensus was support for economic development on regional basis, but not necessarily to fund EMDC. It was noted that Rockport benefited from assistance from EMDC and KWRED.

It was suggested that money could be put aside in an account and let the commissioners decide how to use it for economic development, rather than funding a specific agency. This could be done by putting additional funding in the executive office budget for an economic development office at the County level. It was pointed out that there were specific requests for funding by each of the four organizations that needed to be voted on at this meeting.

- Ann Matlack called for a vote on the motion to fund Eastern Maine Development Corp. at zero. A vote was taken with four in favor and three opposed (Sid Lindsley, Dorothy Meriwether and Elizabeth Dickerson).

Time & Tide RC&D

There was no discussion.

- A motion was made by Jim Bowers to approve \$3,670.00 for Time & Tide RC&D. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Sid Lindsley and Bill Jones).

Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission

There was no discussion.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve \$2,500.00 for Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.

KWRED

KWRED requested \$90,000.00. The county administrator's proposal is for \$70,000.00.

- A motion was made by Jim Bowers to fund KWRED at zero. The motion was seconded by Bill Jones.

Sid Lindsley commented that this was an opportunity to improve economic develop in the area.

Bob Duke remarked that when EMDC and KWRED were working together in the area over the last few years, the program seemed to work. With the split, the KWRED budget blossomed to \$125,000.00 and it is more than can be afforded, especially with \$70,000.00 going to pay for one person on a part-time

basis. The suggestion to have an economic development office at the County level is probably even more costly. Mr. Duke expressed his concern about the agency and its program after reading the distributed material. Waldo County has been reluctant to fund the agency. Rockland cut their contribution in half. Camden contributed the requested \$15,000.00. Rockport benefited from the program, but as a municipality, was not included in the funding formula.

It was noted that the previous model for the agency was not working because of the lack of support for KWRED from EMDC. Economic development should be supported, but the question remains as to what level. There is still some funding available for the first six months of 2010. The executive board is more active than it has been. It was suggested that there needs to be some accountability for KWRED's funding as well as their efforts to bring viable economic development to the area. Commissioner Roger Moody is on the KWRED's executive board. It was suggested that some format would have to be designed for the accountability if taxpayer money is used to support KWRED. Mr. Hinsey submits reports to Rockland and those could be distributed at the meetings the County holds with the town representatives.

Mr. Hart reported that he contacted Lincoln County to obtain information on their economic development program. Lincoln County contracts with Coastal Enterprises, Inc. (CEI), which resembles EMDC. Quarterly reports are available, but the county does not administer the program. It may be possible to work with Lincoln County in a cooperative effort to address economic development in the region.

It was suggested that the County continue its efforts to work with the towns on many issues including economic development and support KWRED for a year and then decide if the support should continue based, on their accountability records. KWRED was recognized as the vehicle for economic development in the area, but the main concern was the \$70,000.00 as a salary for a half time position.

- Sid Lindsley proposed amending the motion to fund KWRED in the amount of \$45,000.00. Bob Duke seconded amending the motion. A vote was taken to amend the motion with four in favor and three opposed (Elizabeth Dickerson, Bill Jones, and Jim Bowers).

Bill Jones commented that he knew many of the members of KWRED's executive board and their credentials were impressive, but he was shocked at the budget request with so little documentation presented.

The question was asked as to whether or not the bylaws of KWRED's executive board included a provision for a commissioner to be a member. Commissioner Roger Moody reported that he was a member by invitation, but it was unclear as to the reason he was invited to serve. It was suggested that perhaps the by-laws could be changed to have a commissioner seated on the executive board and to help with the accountability issue and ensure quarterly reports were distributed.

- A vote was taken on the amended motion to fund KWRED in the amount of \$45,000.00 with four in favor and three opposed (Elizabeth Dickerson, Bill Jones, and Jim Bowers).

Insurance - Risk Management Pool – page 36

There was no discussion.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve \$164,978.00 for Risk Management Pool. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Airport – page 37

It was noted that there was a request for a half time position, which was in the proposed airport budget of \$57,776.00. Bob Duke recommended removing this position. His reason was because of the previous discussion on bringing in a new person to train to take over for the maintenance supervisor when there has been a full-time maintenance person at the airport for a number of years. Mr. Duke said he did not support the recommended amount of \$3,000.00 for advertising.

- A motion was made to approve the Airport budget in the amount of \$41,388.00 by Bob Duke and seconded by Jim Bowers.

Elizabeth Dickerson suggested that the advertising line be kept at \$500.00 as in previous years. Bob agreed to amend his motion to include \$500.00 for advertising.

- The amended motion was to approve the Airport budget in the amount of \$41,888.00. The amended motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Communications – page 41

Communications Director Lothrop requested an additional full-time position and a simulcast system to be financed over five years with the possibility of some funding coming from a grant. It was noted that the part-time line was reduced by \$6,000.00 when the new position was added into the proposed budget.

Jim Bowers suggested taking the new position out and putting the \$6,000.00 back in for the part-time budget line.

- A motion was made to approve the Communications budget in the amount of \$863,522.00 by Jim Bowers and seconded by Sid Lindsley.

The request for the additional position was based on call volume. There is a minimum of two dispatchers on duty with some shifts having three dispatchers. The end users support the addition of the new position and the radio upgrade because it addresses safety issues. It was noted that the space issue still needs to be addressed.

Bob Duke commented that dispatching at a municipal level is far more costly than the assessed fees to support the regional communications center.

Elizabeth Dickerson suggested amending the motion to put the position back in and reducing the part-time line by \$6,000.00. It was agreed to amend the motion.

- The amended motion was to approve the Communications budget in the amount of \$898,249.00. The amended motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Other

Sid Lindsley suggested revisiting the executive office budget and adding \$30,000.00 for economic development.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to add \$30,000.00 to the Executive Office budget for economic development. The motion failed for the lack of a second.

Kathy Robinson explained that the money could not be moved to another department, but it could be used to pay expenses incurred by a vendor.

Bob Duke asked if the painting and lighting project had to be done in 2010. The state agreed to share the cost of the project on 50/50 basis. The state's portion is in their budget that ends July 1, 2010, therefore the project has to be completed before June 30, 2010.

Commissioners' Vote

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the Knox County Budget in the amount of \$6,465,563.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the Communications budget in the amount of \$898,249.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

V. Adjourn

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance W. Johanson
Executive Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at the joint meeting with the Knox County Budget Committee held on December 3, 2009.

Anne H. Beebe-Center, Chair – Commissioner District #1

Richard L. Parent, Jr. – Commissioner District #2

Roger A. Moody – Commissioner District #3