

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

## Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday - November 15, 2012 - 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 15, 2012, 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, 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, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, EMA Administrative Assistant Donna Allen (*left at 6:04 p.m.*), and EMA Director Ray Sisk.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Dorothy Meriwether, Bill Jones, Elizabeth Dickerson, Randy Stearns, and Henry Carey.

Also present were: Don Decker, Jesse McCue and Paul Cook from Maine RealEstate Management; Camden Fire Chief and KRCC Executive Board Chair Chris Farley (*left prior to 6:41 p.m.*); Union Fire Chief Barry Norris (*left at 6:23 p.m.*); Washington Fire Chief and KRCC Advisory Committee Chair Tom Johnston (*left at 6:23 p.m.*); Cushing EMA Director Arthur Kiskila; Carrie Adams, Rockland EMS; George Chappell from the *Courier Gazette* (*arrived at 5:20 p.m.*), Washington Selectman Wes Daniel; and HR Consultant Laurie Bouchard (*arrived at 5:50 p.m.*).

### Special Meeting – Agenda

Thursday – November 15, 2012 – 5:00 p.m.

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|-------------|-------------|--|---------------|
| <b>I.</b>   | <b>5:00</b> | <b>Meeting Called To Order</b> (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)  |               |
| <b>II.</b>  | <b>5:01</b> | <b>Public Comment</b>  |               |
| <b>III.</b> | <b>5:06</b> | <b>Approve Minutes</b> (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)<br>1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of November 8, 2012. |               |
| <b>IV.</b>  | <b>5:08</b> | <b>Appointment to District 8 Budget Committee Seat</b>   |               |
| <b>V.</b>   | <b>5:15</b> | <b>Budget Review</b>   | <u>Pages:</u> |
|             |             | 1. Communications  | 29-32         |
|             |             | 2. EMA   | 15-16         |
|             |             | 3. Building Maintenance  | 10-11         |
|             |             | 4. Building Maintenance – 301 Park Street  | 12            |
|             |             | 5. Debt Service  | 25            |
|             |             | 6. Insurance   | 25            |
|             |             | 7. Other   |               |
| <b>VI.</b>  |             | <b>Adjourn</b>   |               |

#### I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 15, 2012 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke and Commission Chair Roger Moody at 5:05 p.m.

**II. Public Comment**

Chair Bob Duke asked for public comment if there be any. No members of the public asked to speak.

**III. Approve Minutes**1. Joint Budget Meeting of November 8, 2012.

- Randy Stearns motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Lawrence Nash seconded. A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.
- Commissioner Richard Parent motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Carol Maines seconded. A vote was taken with all in favor (Maines, Parent and Moody). The motion therefore passed.

**IV. Appointment to District 8 Budget Committee Seat**

Committee Chair Bob Duke reminded everyone that Thomaston Selectmen had officially recommended Henry Carey to the Budget Committee and Commission as a candidate to fill the District 8 seat for the remainder of the term (ends December 31, 2014).

- Randy Stearns made a motion to accept the Thomaston Selectboard's recommendation to appoint Henry Carey to the District 8 seat. The motion was seconded by Ann Matlack. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- Commissioner Carol Maines made a motion to accept Thomaston Selectboard's recommendation to appoint Henry Carey to the District 8. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

**V. Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee for Review of the Proposed 2013 Budget.****DEPARTMENTAL BUDGETS:****Communications**

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop briefly ran through some highlights from his budget, which included decreases in budgeted over-time, mileage and telephone. A large increase was the Pagers/Tower rental line, which is from relocating 3 different towers as part of the Communications infrastructure upgrade. Another large increase is due to staff needing training on Spillman software upgrades. It was noted that the Radio Infrastructure upgrades will be paid off in 2014.

When Budget Committee member Bill Jones said that he wanted to cut the Communications Budget, several members of the Committee asked him to be more specific; however, Mr. Jones said that he wanted more time to consider what he thought should be cut. Administrator Hart and Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke both reminded everyone present that Administrator Hart and his staff needed to know what the Committee and Commission wanted for numbers in the budget prior to the next meeting because it takes time to plug in the information so that an accurate bottom line amount could be voted on. It was also noted that any changes to a departmental budget should be discussed when the department head was in attendance; if a second discussion happened at a later date, the department head might not be there to defend his/her budget.

Administrator Hart noted that there were members of the Knox Regional Communications Center (KRCC) Advisory Committee and Executive Board in attendance. He stated that the Executive Board supported the budget as it was being presented and that if there are going to be changes made, they should be able to hear it now since they may not be at later meetings if the subject was brought up again.

Union Fire Chief Barry Norris explained to the Budget Committee that decreasing the communications budget does not impact the tax assessment to the towns. The users group agrees that this is what Director Linwood Lothrop needs for a budget and that this is the amount that the users are willing to pay. He reminded the Committee that two years earlier the Budget Committee cut the number of funded dispatchers after the Executive Board had already approved the budget and had already spent time defending those numbers in the towns. He asked that the Committee not affect the level of service to the towns by making any cuts to the budget, especially since the budget is not paid for with taxes. He stated that slashing the budget without giving the Director and the Executive Board time to find out first about what can be done with the costs of the towers could harm the level of service being provided to the towns.

It was noted that the department was able to cover the costs of the wage adjustments in part because the rest of the year's part-time budget has been eliminated.

Straw vote:

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with seven (Matlack, Duke, Meriwether, Jones, Dickerson, Stearns, Nash) Budget Committee members in favor of approving the Communications budget as presented, with one abstention (Carey).

**Emergency Management Agency**

EMA Director Ray Sisk explained that a lot of the funding for projects comes through federal grants and other sources. Additional phone lines had been installed for the CityWatch System. The Operations & Resources Planner position is still grant funded until July of 2014 and there has been no indication that the County wouldn't be able to get more grants to fund it in the future.

Straw vote:

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with all Budget Committee members in favor of the EMA budget as presented.

**Building Maintenance**

Administrator Hart noted that there are no personnel services because the County is contracting that out.

Straw vote:

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with all Budget Committee members in favor of the Building Maintenance budget as presented.

**Building Maintenance – 301 Park Street**

Maine RealEstate Management is handing building maintenance services for this property as well as the courthouse. A lot of the costs for the property are still unknown because the previous tenants used the building pre-renovation and for different purposes. It's now going to be a 24/7 facility. Administrator Hart expressed some concern that the current amount in the budget is too low. Jesse McCue and Paul Cook both briefly talked about what they thought some changes to the budget numbers should be, including both some decreases and increases.

Straw vote:

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with all Budget Committee members in favor of approving the revised Building Maintenance – 301 Park Street budget as presented with changes as suggested by MREM for a new budget total of \$49,318.

**Debt Service**

Straw vote:

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with all Budget Committee members in favor of approving the Debt Service budget as presented.

**Insurance****Straw vote:**

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with all Budget Committee members in favor of approving the Insurance budget as presented.

**Time & Tide RC & D**

Administrator Hart explained that he had received additional information and forwarded it on to the Budget Committee and Commission. He briefly reviewed the information they had all received.

A few Budget Committee members voiced wanting to de-fund Time & Tide. Others, including Commissioner Parent, felt that the organization provided a viable service to the County that is useful to farmers taking advantage of their grant-writing expertise. The Committee wanted to know how many people the organization helps or “touches” in a year.

**Straw vote:**

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with 3-4-1 (Matlack, Nash, Dickerson) Budget Committee members in favor of approving the Time & Tide budget as presented, with four against (Stearns, Duke, Jones, Carey), and one abstention (Meriwether).

Administrator Hart noted that of the questions he had relayed to Mr. Wells after the previous meeting, Mr. Wells had not responded to the question about how much was in the equity funds so he said he would follow up with Mr. Wells on that.

**Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water**

Administrator Hart stated that he still hadn't heard back from Mark Hedrich yet so he said he would call Mr. Hedrich tomorrow.

**MCEDD**

Administrator Hart explained that he had received additional information and forwarded it to the Budget Committee and Commission. It was noted that Knox County is in this particular Economic District so if the County chose not to fund them, Knox County towns would not have access to the District's services. The funding request for 2013 is \$14,245. Most opinions voiced on the organization were positive in nature.

**Straw vote:**

A straw vote for the sake of getting a consensus was taken with 5-3-0 (Meriwether, Duke, Matlack, Carey, Dickerson) Budget Committee members in favor of approving the MCEDD budget as presented, with three against (Stearns, Jones, Nash).

**Administration & Information Technology**

Administrator Hart explained that the figure for Spillman costs on Page 8 was last year's figure because he had not known it was going to end up changing. The figure had since been changed to \$39,415. To offset the increase, he was proposing lowering consultation fees for the HR Consultant down to \$42,000.

**Personnel Services - CPI and Step Increase**

1.7 % COLA

2% step increase

Several Budget Committee members voiced the opinion that the Commission and Committee both needed to follow through with the Wage Plan as it has already been implemented.

There was some question as to whether the Budget Committee had the right to be taking a vote on the 2% Step increase because it's the equivalent of longevity and the Budget Committee has never been involved in that before – longevity increases have always been automatic. HR Consultant Laurie Bouchard noted

that the Job Evaluation & Salary Administration Policy talks about the types of increases that can be approved on a regular basis, and a Step increase does fall under that policy as something that's not automatic.

In the current budget draft, all eligible employees will receive a 3.7% increase (2% Step + 1.7% COLA). Those figures have already been built into the budget proposal with the exception of the elected officials and the Commission because they aren't part of the compensation plan.

Straw vote: 3 - 4 - 1

Those in favor of both the 1.7% CPI and 2% Step Increase: Matlack, Meriwether, Duke

Those against: Carey, Stearns, Dickerson, Nash

Those abstaining: Jones

- Dorothy Meriwether motioned to have elected officials also get a 2% increase besides the 1.7% CPI. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. Both Dorothy and Randy withdrew their motion and second.
- Dorothy motioned to accept the administrator's proposal for personnel services (which includes both the 1.7% COLA and the 2% Step Increase for those eligible) as currently presented in the budget draft. The motion was seconded by Ann Matlack. A vote was taken 3-4-1, with three in favor (Matlack, Meriwether, Duke), four against (Stearns, Carey, Nash, Dickerson), and one abstention (Jones).

After further discussion, it was suggested that the group try taking a straw vote on having the 1.7% COLA in the budget but not the 2% Step Increase. Therefore a straw vote was taken with 6-2 in favor (Duke, Nash, Carey, Stearns, Jones, Dickerson) and two against (Meriwether, Matlack).

## **VI. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Ann Matlack to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Randy Stearns. A vote was taken with all in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Maines. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 8:08 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 December 11, 2012.**