

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – November 17, 2011 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 17, 2011, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Office 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 Office Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Sheriff Donna Dennison (*left at 5:35 p.m.*), Chief Deputy Tim Carroll (*arrived at 5:25 p.m.*) and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Tina Plummer, Bill Jones, and Elizabeth Dickerson. *Budget Committee members not present: Mason Johnson.*

Special Meeting – Agenda

Thursday – November 17, 2011 – 5:00 p.m.

- I. 5:00 **Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 **Approve Minutes** (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
 1. Minutes of Budget Review Meeting of November 10, 2011.
- III. 5:03 **Public Comment**
- IV. 5:05 **Budget Committee/Commission Comment**
- V. 5:10 **Budget Review**
 1. Compensation Study
 2. Departmental Budgets-Any Department Needing Further Review
- VI. 6:00 **Final Vote on all Department Budgets** (*in preparation for Public Hearing*)
- VII. 6:15 **Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 17, 2011 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.

II. Approve Minutes

1. Joint Budget Meeting of November 10, 2011.

Chair Bob Duke asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

- Lawrence Nash motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Ann Matlack seconded. A vote was taken with 8-0 in favor (Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns). The motion therefore passed.
- Commissioner Parent motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Maines seconded. A vote was taken with all in favor: 3-0 (Maines, Moody and Parent). The motion therefore passed.

III. Public Comment

There was none.

IV. Budget Committee / Commission Comment

Committee Chair Bob Duke asked the Committee and Commission if anyone had any matters that needed to be brought up and addressed.

Communications Budget

Randy Stearns wanted to clarify his position on the Communications Budget because he wasn't sure if he explained it very well at the last meeting. He said that he worried about just throwing funds in a big

pot. He doesn't mind if the Committee knows it's going to be a big expense and budget portions each year, but he doesn't like throwing funding for multiple expenses all together and taking out funds when the department needs it. He would rather designate a line item in the budget so you can see it.

Building Maintenance

Ann Matlack voiced some concern that she felt that the representative for the building maintenance contractor (Paul Cook from Maine Real Estate Management, LLC) was "lackadaisical" about replacing windows. She felt that the courthouse is a historic building that needed to be taken very seriously. She was concerned that the window replacement project was being approached as just "a patch job". Administrator Hart explained that the County has been working with the historical preservation society and is taking the project very seriously. He said that he did not believe that Paul Cook had meant to come across that way at the last meeting. The County is spending anywhere from \$6-8,000 per window to try to match what's already there.

Several committee members were concerned about a comment by Paul Cook at the last meeting that windows have a "30-year payback". They felt that maybe Mr. Cook wasn't taking it seriously. Bill Jones wondered if the County wasn't engaged in the right process with windows anymore if that's the outlook for windows. Commissioner Parent commented that 30 years is probably an average and when there are windows so bad that snow is blowing in (like in the finance office), getting those replaced is an immediate improvement.

V. Joint Meeting with the Budget Committee for Review of the Proposed 2012 Budget.

Compensation Study

Administrator Hart explained that he had handed out a chart showing the 4 options that the Commission had reviewed on Monday. Option 1 was recommended by both the administrator and the Commission. It's an effect of \$208,104 on the budget (not counting the jail).

Finance Director Kathy Robinson explained that Option 1 gets all of the adjustments for employees done in one year with everyone on the right step except the 12 people that are already above their step. Option 1 does not include any CPI increase, and since the elected officials did not participate in the wage study, none of them will receive any increase in the 2012 budget.

**Option 1
Adjust to 16 Steps - No CPI**

	16 Steps	% Inc	No Inc Over Step
Administration & IT	\$4,493	2%	1
Deeds	\$8,850	8%	1
District Attorney	\$35,942	16%	
Emergency Management Agency	\$18,311	26%	
Finance	\$21,667	16%	
Probate	\$5,491	5%	
Sheriff	\$71,578	9%	1
Subtotal	\$166,332		3
Airport	\$12,549	6%	2
Communications	\$29,223	6%	
Subtotal	\$208,104	9%	5
Jail	\$72,615	5%	7
Grand Total	\$280,719	7%	12

Notes:

No increase included for elected positions in option (1) 16 steps
EMA clerk changed from 35 hours to 30 hours

County Administrator recommends option 1
11/14/11 County Commission approved option 1

There were various questions as budget committee members tried to understand how to read the Option 1 chart and compare it to the data in the budget. There were also questions about the math that was used to calculate the numbers.

Committee members expressed various feelings and concerns about the implementation of the study in the 2012 budget. It was expressed that some employees seemed to be getting increases in pay far beyond what they should be getting. Budget Committee members were reminded that the Committee needed to

vote on the budget as a whole – the Committee either supports the study in its entirety or not at all. The Committee could not break it apart and approve parts of the results and not approve other parts. This meeting was not the forum for criticizing specific employees and/or their salaries, especially since the process as a whole was complex and included a lot of factors beyond just the information that the Committee had in front of them.

Bob Duke voiced his personal opinion that while the implementation of the study was a lot of money, it in some ways corrects the inequities of pay that are the fault of the Committee because the Committee prevented employees from getting increases when they probably should have in past years. The Committee had asked for the study to be done. It cannot be done in multiple years so if the County is going to implement it correctly, it needs to be done all at once. Other committee members voiced similar opinions.

The question was asked if the Committee was operating on the assumption that Committee was voting for Option 1. It was explained that the Commission had voted for Option 1 and those are the numbers that are currently in the budget. The Committee votes on the bottom line.

Benefits - Grandfathering

It was noted that the Commission has not taken any formal vote on phasing out grandfathered health benefits. This will be discussed at the Regular Commission meeting in December.

Procedural Question

There was a discussion about how the Budget Committee voted on the individual budgets. There was some difference of opinion on how to not only interpret the County's Charter, but also what the original intent had been of the Charter Committee when the Charter was written. The majority of the Budget Committee members believed that the Committee could only vote on the bottom line of each budget, while a couple others thought that the word "itemized" in the Charter language indicated that the Committee had control over the itemized lines. Administrator Hart commented that the Charter says that the Budget Committee shall "review" the itemized lines, which is what the Committee is doing; however, the Committee only votes on the bottom line. Bill Jones added that the Committee can suggest changes for the bottom line as long as an explanation of why a different amount is being suggested is included.

Surplus

Administrator Hart handed out a copy of the administration summary proposal and a copy of the statute on surplus usage (**MRSA Title 30-A, §924 Surplus Funds**), contingency funds, and reducing the tax levy. He read aloud from the statute:

"The county commissioners of each county shall use any unencumbered surplus funds at the end of a fiscal year in the following fiscal year only as provided in this section.

1. Restore contingent fund. The county commissioners shall first use any unencumbered surplus funds to restore the contingent account as provided in section 922, subsection 2.

2. Reduce tax levy. After restoring the contingent account under subsection 1, the county commissioners shall use any unencumbered surplus funds to reduce the tax levy in the following fiscal year as provided in this subsection. The county commissioners shall use any remaining unencumbered surplus funds in excess of...20%...of the amount to be raised by taxation in the following fiscal year to reduce the tax levy in that year. The county commissioners may not commit taxes to be raised in any fiscal year until the county commissioners have complied with this subsection.

3. Other uses; working capital. After compliance with subsection 2, the county commissioners may use any remaining unencumbered surplus funds to fund a county charter commission, as provided in section 1322, subsection 4, or to establish or fund a capital reserve account under section 921, including a corrections services capital reserve account, as provided in section 5801. If not used for these purposes, any remaining surplus funds may not be expended but must be retained as working capital for the use and benefit of the county..."

- Bill Jones motioned to urge the commissioners to put the undesignated fund balance at the state mandated minimum of 20%.
- Ann Matlack seconded the motion.
- 5 voted in favor: Jones, Nash, Stearns, Plummer, and Duke
- 3 opposed: Matlack, Meriwether and Dickerson
- The motion therefore passed.

VI. Final Vote on All Department Budgets.

Administration and Information Technology

Administrator's proposal is: \$533,635

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Building Maintenance

Administrator's proposal is: \$255,199

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Building Maintenance – 301 Park Street

Administrator's proposal is: \$54,346

- Lawrence Nash motioned to set the budget at \$27,173.
- Randy Stearns seconded the motion.
- A vote was taken with 2-6 in favor: Nash and Stearns
- Opposed: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Dickerson, Jones
- The motion therefore failed.

- Elizabeth Dickerson motioned to set the budget at \$34,346.
- Bill Jones seconded the motion.
- Both the motion and second were withdrawn.

- Elizabeth Dickerson motioned to set the budget at \$40,000.
- Dorothy Meriwether seconded the motion.
- A vote was taken with 5-3 in favor: Dickerson, Duke, Jones, Matlack and Plummer
- Opposed: Meriwether, Nash and Stearns
- The motion therefore passed.

District Attorney's Office

Administrator's proposal is: \$380,807

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Emergency Management Agency

Administrator's proposal is: \$64,384

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- 5 in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Dickerson
- 2 Against: Stearns and Nash
- 1 Abstained: Jones

Finance

Administrator's proposal is: \$247,005

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- 6 in favor Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Dickerson, Jones
- 1 Against: Nash
- 1 Abstained: Stearns

Probate

Administrator's proposal is: \$129,509

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- 7 in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones
- 1 Abstained: Stearns

Registry of Deeds

Administrator's proposal is: (\$103,977)

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Sheriff's Department - PATROL

Administrator's proposal is: \$1,621,401

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- 7 in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones
- 1 Abstained: Stearns

Airport

Administrator's proposal is: \$112,850

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- Bill Jones motioned to cut the bottom line to \$40,389.22
- Randy Stearns seconded the motion.
- A vote was taken with 1-7 favor: Jones
- Opposed: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, and Stearns
- The motion therefore failed.

- A vote was taken for full Airport budget (\$112,850) with 6-2 in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Nash, Dickerson, and Stearns
- Opposed: Jones and Duke
- The motion therefore passed.

Communications

Administrator's proposal is: \$993,624

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- 5 in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Duke, Dickerson, and Jones
- 2 Opposed: Meriwether and Nash
- 1 Abstained: Stearns

Debt Service

Administrator's proposal is: \$15,000

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Insurance – MCCA Risk Pool

Administrator's proposal is: \$92,284

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- All in favor: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, Dickerson, Jones, and Stearns

Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service

Agency request: \$55,662

Administrator's proposal is: \$54,570

- (No straw vote taken.)

Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District

Agency request: \$20,587

Administrator's proposal is: \$19,421

- (No straw vote taken.)

Time & Tide RC & D

Agency request: \$3,625

Administrator's proposal is: \$3,625

- Bill Jones motioned to defund Time & Tide.
- There was no second. No vote was taken.

Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission

Agency request: \$2,500

Administrator's proposal is: \$2,500

- (No straw vote taken.)

Maine Coast Economic Alliance / KWRED

Agency request: \$45,000

Administrator's proposal is: \$45,000

Budget Committee Straw vote:

- Bill motioned to defund Maine Coast Economic Alliance (not fund it at all)
- There was no second
- Bill Jones motioned to fund MCEA at half of their request, which would be \$22,500.
- Lawrence Nash seconded.
- 2 voted in favor Nash and Jones,
- 6 Opposed: Plummer, Matlack, Meriwether, Duke, Dickerson, and Stearns
- The motion therefore failed.
- Lawrence Nash motioned to fund MCEA it at \$35,000
- Dorothy Meriwether seconded.
- 6 voted in favor: Plummer, Meriwether, Duke, Nash, , Jones, and Stearns
- 2 Opposed: Matlack and Dickerson.
- The motion therefore passed.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice S. Richards
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their joint meeting on December 1, 2011.