

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

## Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – December 9, 2010 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Tuesday, December 9, 2010, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Executive Assistant Constance Johanson was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Anne Beebe-Center, 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, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Registrar of Probate Elaine Hallett, Registrar of Deeds Lisa Simmons, District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau, Prosecutorial Assistant Shane Riley, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, EMA Director Ray Sisk, and Executive Assistant Constance Johanson.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke (*who joined the meeting in progress at 5:22 p.m.*), Sid Lindsley, Dorothy Meriwether, Tina Plummer, Mason Johnson, Elizabeth Dickerson (*who joined the meeting in progress at 5:45 p.m.*), and Bill Jones by telephone.

Also present were: Alan Hinsey of Knox-Waldo Regional Economic District Council (KWRED), Carol Maines of Rockland, Chris Rector of Thomaston, Tom Johnston of Washington, and Steve Betts of *The Herald Gazette*.

### Special Meeting – Agenda Thursday – December 9, 2010 – 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 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 December 2, 2010.
- III. 5:05 Final Vote on all Department Budgets** (*in preparation for Public Hearing*)
- IV. 6:30 Adjourn**

#### **I. Meeting Called to Order**

The December 9, 2010 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Ann Matlack and Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center.

#### **II. Approve Minutes**

Chair Ann Matlack called for a motion and second to approve the minutes of the Budget Review Session held on December 2, 2010.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 2, 2010. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that the minutes read that “Bob Duke said he is not in favor of supporting this budget (finance office) because it has increased by \$4,100.00 each year for the last three years” and he, Commissioner Moody, thought this was incorrect. He suggested that the figure was closer to \$48,000.00 over the last three years. It appeared that the point Mr. Duke was trying to make was that the finance office budget increased significantly over the last three years. Page 22 shows that the finance office budget went from \$84,932.00 in 2007 to \$230,415.00 in 2011. It was suggested that the minutes should state that the finance office increased by \$48,000.00, each year on average, over the last three years.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 2, 2010 as amended. The motion was seconded by Tina Plummer. A vote was taken with all in favor to approve the minutes as amended.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center called for a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the Budget Review Session held on December 2, 2010 as amended.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the minutes of the meeting held on December 2, 2010 as amended. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor to approve the minutes as amended.

### III. Final Vote on all Department Budgets *(in preparations for Public Hearing)*

#### Program Grants – page 32

The Program Grants were discussed at a previous meeting, but no consensus was taken at that time.

#### Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$2,500.00.

- A motion was made by Bill Jones to approve the administrator's proposal of \$2,500.00 for Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.

#### Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$54,570.00. Sid Lindsley suggested reducing this amount by five percent.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$54,570.00 less five percent, which is \$51,841.50 for the Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service. The motion was rounded up for an amount of \$51,842.00. There was no second to the motion.
- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve the administrator's proposal of \$54,570.00 for the Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service. The motion was seconded by Tina Plummer. A vote was taken with five in favor and one opposed (Sid Lindsley).

#### Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$19,421.00.

- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve the administrator's proposal of \$19,421.00 for the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District. The motion was seconded by Tina Plummer. A vote was taken with three in favor, one opposed (Sid Lindsley), and two abstentions (Bill Jones and Mason Johnson). The motion passed.

*Bob Duke arrived at 5:22 p.m.*

#### Eastern Maine Development Corp. (EMDC)

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$0.00.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$0.00 for Eastern Maine Development Corp. The motion was seconded by Mason Johnson.

Commissioner Roger Moody explained that the county approved an appropriation of \$0.00 for EMDC last year. After much discussion as to the impact of this decision, it was determined that the county probably would not have access to grant funding because of this decision. KWRED paid the county's membership dues of \$2,500.00 last year so that the county could remain a participant in the economic district and have "a place at the table". The county will be changing economic districts effective September 31, 2011. Until the county makes that change, there is some concern that same problem will arise by appropriating zero funds for EMDC. He suggested approving \$1,875.00 for EMDC, which is three quarters of the \$2,500.00 that KWRED contributed to EMDC in 2010 on behalf of the county. It was suggested that a dollar could be offered as a token. It was noted that the amount of \$1,875.00 was a token amount for holding a "place at the table".

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$0.00 for Eastern Maine Development Corp. The motion was seconded by Mason Johnson. A vote was taken with three in favor (Bill Jones, Mason Johnson, and Sid Lindsley) and four opposed (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Tina Plummer, and Dorothy Meriwether). The motion failed.
- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve an amount of \$2,000.00 for Eastern Maine Development Corporation. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Sid Lindsley and Mason Johnson). The motion passed.

#### Time & Tide RC&D

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$3,625.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$3,625.00 for Time & Tide RC&D. The motion was seconded by Tina Plummer. A vote was taken with four in favor and three opposed (Bill Jones, Sid Lindsley, and Mason Johnson). The motion passed.

Knox-Waldo Regional Economic District Council (KWRED)

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$45,000.00.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$45,000.00 for Knox-Waldo Regional Economic District Council. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether.

Bill Jones suggested taking \$2,000.00 out, which is the amount being appropriated to EMDC. He suggested that this is not the way economic development works. Commissioner Roger Moody recommended approving the proposed amount.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$45,000.00 for Knox-Waldo Regional Economic District Council. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Bill Jones and Mason Johnson). The motion passed.

Insurance – Risk Management Pool

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$100,578.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$100,578.00 for the Risk Management Pool. The motion was seconded by Tina Plummer. A vote was taken with all in favor (*seven in favor*).

District Attorney's Office

District Attorney Geoff Rushlau reported that he made a mistake in the postage line and asked for an additional \$800.00. There were no other adjustments. The administrator's proposal is for an amount of \$345,313.00 and the D.A. is asking for \$346,113.00.

The only item to consider is the two percent wage increase for the cost of living. One suggestion is that the committee should vote on the bottom line minus the two percent increase in wages. Many other agencies are not receiving a cost of living increase.

The county administrator said this topic was discussed at a recent staff meeting. The overall increase in the budget is .71 percent over the 2010 budget because of the appropriation to EMDC that was approved at this meeting. Mr. Hart said understood that the committee wanted to flat fund the budget, but the increases in taxes is due to the school budget, which no one seems to have any control over. The department heads developed a reasonable budget. The wage and benefit study that is to be conducted in 2011 could have a major impact on the 2012 budget and on future budgets. The decision not to give a wage increase this year could add to the impact on future budgets.

*Elizabeth Dickerson arrived at 5:45 p.m.*

Sid Lindsley, Bob Duke and Bill Jones support removing the two percent wage increase. Bill Jones, Tina Plummer, and Elizabeth Dickerson support the wage and classification study. Elizabeth Dickerson pointed out that the CPI for September was 1.4 percent and suggested using that figure as a compromise.

Ann Matlack suggested that the county made up for the low salaries by offering a generous benefit package. Several employees' wages are lower than perhaps they should be because of the turn over in their position.

It was noted that the union was in mediation because of the two percent wage increase and the feeling that it was not enough. If the union prevails, then funds will have to be found to fund any increase. This could impact the non-union personnel. The consensus of the committee was that, whatever the outcome of the mediation, all employees should be treated the same.

- A motion was made by Bill Jones to approve the administrator's proposal of \$346,113.00 for the District Attorney's office minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with six in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson). The motion passed.

*Mason Johnson left the meeting at 6:05 p.m.*

Building Maintenance

The only change to this budget proposal was in the capital line for the Superior Court carpet. The amount of \$5,000.00 in the budget has been reduced to \$3,100.00. The final recommendation is for \$338,083.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$338,083.00 for the Building Maintenance Department. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with six in favor and one opposed (Elizabeth Dickerson). The motion passed.

#### Emergency Management Agency (EMA)

There are no additional changes to this proposed budget, which is for \$51,751.00.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$51,751.00 for the Emergency Management Agency minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson). The motion passed.

#### Executive Office

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$513,427.00.

- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve the administrator's proposal of \$513,427.00 for the Executive Office minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson). The motion passed.

#### Finance Department

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$230,415.00

- A motion was made by Dorothy Meriwether to approve the administrator's proposal of \$230,415.00 for the Finance Office minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with four in favor and three opposed (Bob Duke, Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson). The motion passed.

#### Probate Court

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$130,874.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$130,874.00 for the Probate Court minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with five in favor and three opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson).

#### Registry of Deeds

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of minus \$107,368.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of minus \$107,368.00 for the Registry of Deeds minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson).

#### Sheriff's Office – Patrol Division

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$1,487,050.00.

Ann Matlack commented that she hoped the commissioners would look at the "ratcheting" down affect of the turn over in this office especially in the case of the patrol administrator's position. This is one item that the pay and classification study could review.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$1,487,050.00 for the Sheriff's Office minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson).

#### Debt Service

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$25,000.00.

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to approve the administrator's proposal of \$25,000.00 for the Debt Service (Tax Anticipation Note interest). The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.

#### Airport

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$79,409.00.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$79,409.00 for the Airport minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke for discussion.

Elizabeth Dickerson explained that she was voting against each of the motions because of her concern over the pay. It was noted that it appears that there is a number of reserve accounts and these may be a source of funding for some items.

The surplus has been discussed and its use for assisting with cash flow problems associated with the reimbursement process for the airport improvement projects. It appears that the airport's surplus is not included in the county's surplus figure. The question was asked as to why the airport's surplus is not used instead of the county's surplus. The answer is that there is not enough in the airport surplus to handle paying for the projects and waiting for the reimbursement. The airport surplus is approximately \$50,000.00, which is 13 percent of the airport's expenditures as recommended by the auditor. It was suggested that the airport surplus should be greater. In order to make the surplus grow, more money would have to put in the airport budget and not be expended and that is not the way the county operates. Budgets are estimates and surplus is created when the estimate for expenditures proves to be less than expected.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves explained that the rationale for putting as little of county funds in the airport budget as possible is that any funds not used have to stay with the airport by FAA regulations. It was noted that the surplus figure is not expected to increase by the end of 2010.

Ann Matlack commented that her concern is the airport manager's salary. The business plan recommended increasing the pay for the airport manager. The wage and classification study may also address this issue.

Bob Duke commented that, as part of regional economic development, the terminal is a benefit, but he is concerned with the number of improvement plans for the airport. He commented that he thought the presentation on the airport budget was confusing. He suggested paying for the landscaping of the grounds around the terminal should be part of the terminal project. If it is not, then it should come from airport reserves and not be part of the 2011 budget.

Bill Jones commented that he believes having the airport is important for economic development of the region, but he believes that the airport should be paid for by the users. Additional hangars would pay for the support of airport operations.

- A vote was taken with four in favor and three opposed (Bob Duke, Tina Plummer, and Elizabeth Dickerson).

#### Communications

The administrator's proposal is for the amount of \$939,252.00.

Elizabeth Dickerson commented that this department provides a very critical service and the pay study should take this into account. Sid Lindsley commented that the sheriff's office should also be looked at in terms of the service of that the department provides. The question was asked if the study's recommendations would be implemented at the conclusion of the study. The response was that there is no money in the budget to increase wages in 2011. Any suggested wage adjustments would have to be put in the budget for 2012 or phased in over the next several years.

It was suggested that one priority for 2011 should be finding a solution to the space needs issue. Communications needs to have sufficient room to operate.

- A motion was made by Sid Lindsley to approve the administrator's proposal of \$939,252.00 for the Communications Department minus the two percent wage increase. The motion was seconded by Dorothy Meriwether. A vote was taken with five in favor and two opposed (Tina Plummer and Elizabeth Dickerson).

#### Conclusion

The budget committee has made their decisions on the proposed 2011 budget. It was suggested that the commissioners would vote at their regular meeting next Tuesday. The county administrator suggested voting tonight because the budget needed to be finalized and sent tomorrow to the municipalities so that they receive it before the Public Hearing on December 16, 2010.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the administrator's proposed budget for 2011 with the changes made and voted on by the budget committee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with two in favor and one opposed (Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center).

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that he was concerned with the wages. Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that she was concerned with the union being in mediation, its outcome, and the possible impact of it on wages.

The public hearing on the 2011 budget is scheduled for December 16, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

**IV. Adjourn**

A motion was made by Bob Duke to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Elizabeth Dickerson to adjourn. A vote was taken with all in favor.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Constance W. Johanson  
Executive Assistant