

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – March 1, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting with the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, March 1, 2012 4:00 p.m., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. One member of the public and one member of the press were present for part of the work session. There was no public comment period, and due to an oversight the session was not recorded.

Commission members present were: Roger A. Moody, Chair and Commissioner, District 3, and Richard L. Parent, Commissioner District 2 (*Commission members not present: Carol L. Maines*)

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart.

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

Also present were: Laurie Bouchard, HR Consultant.

Special Meeting – Agenda Thursday – March 1, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.

- I. 4:00 Meeting Called To Order (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Roger Moody for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 4:05 Budget Committee/Commission Work Session - Knox County 2012 Budget
- III. Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

The March 1, 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.

II. Budget Committee/Commission Work Session - Knox County 2012 Budget

County Administrator Andrew Hart distributed the following materials:

- The 2012 Budget (unchanged from December 1, 2011)
- A copy of a Knox County Press Release which appeared in the Courier Gazette on this same date.
- A copy of a memo and attachments from Sheriff Dennison to the Budget Committee and Commissioners, which the County Administrator received late in the day on Monday, February 28, 2012.

Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke opened the work session for comments and questions. Subjects discussed by those present included the following:

- The Sheriff's memo and attachments, including the listing of point values in the Job Evaluation System, which County Administrator Andrew Hart and HR Consultant Laurie Bouchard felt was confidential information, and which was initially removed from the Sheriff's package. Dorothy Meriwether requested that it be included under Freedom of Access, and it was provided to all present. The accuracy and method of gathering the data included in the Sheriff's report was questioned. Concerns were raised that, if the data is accurate, it appears that the Knox County incumbents are amongst the highest paid in comparison to other counties. Budget Committee

members requested Compensation Study information by position and by County to compare to the Sheriff's Report; this will be provided.

- The question of whether or not the vote taken in December was legal or not was discussed. County Administrator Andrew Hart indicated that he had asked legal counsel for an opinion. Legal counsel did not feel that having a budget committee member participate by phone was an issue, but that the lack of a 10-day notice and the form of the notice could be problematic. Commission Chair Roger Moody indicated that he felt that the Budget should be re-voted on a matter of principle, irrespective of the legal opinion.
- Dorothy Meriwether expressed concerns about not previously understanding how jobs were evaluated and assigned to grades/salary ranges, as well as how experience was calculated in assigning employees to Steps in the associated pay grade. HR Consultant Laurie Bouchard explained the process in detail and answered questions.
- Questions were raised about elected officials. It was explained that both the Sheriff and the Judge of Probate did not feel that their positions should have Job Descriptions because their responsibilities are spelled out in the Constitution and State Statutes. Since the job descriptions are the underpinning of the Job Evaluation Program, all three elected officials' positions were removed from the Study. The three elected officials have been invited to the March Commission meeting to discuss how they feel their compensation should be evaluated going forward.
- There was discussion about the options for moving forward with the Compensation Program as it related to the 2012 Budget. Some members suggested that increases be capped at a certain percent (such as 9%), and that any amount above this level be phased in over time. Bill Jones indicated that he has been working on a algorithm which he will share with the County Administrator. Laurie Bouchard pointed up that reversing the earlier decision on raises would have a number of negative ripple effects, including: the increases have already been communicated in writing to all employees, and they have been implemented except for Communications and the Jail; employees have made life decisions (such as purchases, etc.) based on the information that they have been given; new hires are being brought in under the new Program - unfair to existing employees if they are not given the same consideration; the employees with large increases have been significantly underpaid (according to the market survey) - continuing to undervalue them would seem to be an injustice; employees limited to 9% would not be on a Step going forward; and, lastly, the legality of changing rates of pay that have been communicated in writing would be brought into question (and would undoubtedly be the basis for many grievances).
- Bob Duke reminded everyone that the Organizational Study was done first, which resulted in significant savings for the County due to reductions in the number of County personnel. The Budget Committee and the Commission approved the Compensation Study, and knew going in that there would be a need to make salary adjustments.

III. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew L. Hart
County Administrator

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on April 10, 2012. The Knox County Budget Committee will approve these minutes at their next quarterly meeting during Quarter 1 of 2012.