

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Special Meeting**

**Thursday – August 18, 2011 - 9:00 a.m.**

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Thursday, August 18, 2011, at 9:00 a.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Carol L. Maines, Commissioner District #1 (*arrived at 9:18 a.m.*), Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Roger A. Moody, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew L. Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Registrar of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll, Probate Judge Carol Emery (*left at 10:07 a.m., returned at 10:21 a.m.*), DA Prosecutorial Assistant Shane Riley, DA's Office Victim Witness Advocate Stephanie Laite, DA's Office Victim Witness Advocate Lynn Talbot, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, Technical Support Specialist Mike Dean (*arrived at 9:27 a.m.*), and Sheriff Donna Dennison.

Others in attendance: Laurie Bouchard of LBouchard & Associates; Gary Thornton of Thornton & Associates.

<b>Special Meeting – Agenda</b>		
<b><u>Thursday – August 18, 2011 – 9:00 a.m.</u></b>		
<b>Commissioners and Department Manager's Workshop</b>		
<b>Total Compensation / Position Classification Study</b>		
<b>I.</b>	<b>9:00</b>	<b>Meeting Called To Order</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>9:01 – 9:30</b>	<b>External Market Review</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explanation of terms</li><li>• Interpreting the results - Wages &amp; Benefits</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>
<b>III.</b>	<b>9:30 – 9:45</b>	<b>Job Evaluation Process</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review of Position Analysis Questionnaire</li><li>• Maintenance of the Job Evaluation system</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>9:45 – 10:30</b>	<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2012 Pay Plan Structure Options</li><li>• Option 1 – Step Plan</li><li>• Option 2 – Open Ranges Plan</li><li>• Salary Adjustment Recommendations</li><li>• Going forward – Longevity (length of service)</li><li>• Questions</li></ul>
<b>V.</b>	<b>10:30 – 10:45</b>	<b>Job Descriptions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discussion of review/approval process</li></ul>
<b>VI.</b>	<b>10:45 – 11:00</b>	<b>Outstanding Questions/Comments</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>11:00</b>	<b>Other Items</b>
<b>VIII.</b>	<b>Adjourn</b>	

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

Commission Chair Roger Moody called the August 18, 2011 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 9:00 a.m. He then turned the time over to Gary Thornton.

Mr. Thornton explained that he would be focusing on the executive summary. He added that all other fifteen counties were invited to participate and he also had selected public sector (like municipalities) and private sector to participate in the external market survey.

Probate Judge Carol Emery asked why elected officials, except for commissioners, were included in the study. Mr. Thornton explained that some of the feedback from the counties included elected officials and no one suggested that elected officials shouldn't be included. He said that it was not his decision to decide whether to include them or not. Commissioner Moody commented that there had not been any active decision on whether to include the Commission in the study or not but that the Commission pay is set by the Budget Committee, is paid as a yearly stipend rather than a salary, and was fairly recently set. Commissioners also do not receive County benefits while the other elected officials do.

Laurie Bouchard introduced herself as an HR consultant and explained that she has been involved in working on the job descriptions and assisting with the Compensation Study project. Besides attracting and retaining employees, there are other reasons for job descriptions, which include legal reasons such

as ADA compliance, physical requirements, disclaimers, etc. If the County kept elected officials included in the study, it gives the County a salary range to work with. Judge Emery said that she and the sheriff both disagreed with having their positions in the study on the same level with the other department heads or management because their job is on a different level and is unique.

Mr. Thornton said he would leave it up to the Commission to make the decision. The Sheriff commented that she has made no secret that she does not believe she should be included in the study. If the legislature wanted sheriffs to have another job description other than what is written into statute, they would create one. She asked what the Commission would do if someone elected does not meet the requirements set by the Commission. She added that she only participated in the employee written survey to see what other sheriffs were doing and to set the example for her staff who did not want to participate.

## II. External Market Review

### Explanation of terms

Mr. Thornton went through the charts starting on page 7 and explained the terms and what the figures represented to assist the meeting attendees in understanding what the chart represented.

### Interpreting the results - Wages & Benefits

Commissioner Moody asked about the worth of having the different percentiles included in the data. Mr. Thornton replied that it is useful for setting pay ranges and how people will influence pay changes once those ranges are put into place. He recommended having the pay range set around the 50 percentile.

The Sheriff asked if she could see a copy of the information that Mr. Thornton had collected from any participating organizations/agencies. Mr. Thornton asked Administrator Hart to email the full-report out to anyone that wanted to see that information and Administrator Hart responded that he would be willing to do that.

### Page 6 – Benefits Analysis

Mr. Thornton commented that the analysis included information from both public and private sector markets. He said that it was not up to him to say what the County should do regarding benefits; that decision is the Commission's responsibility. He added that he was not asked to make recommendations of what the Commission should do for benefits for the employees.

## III. Job Evaluation Process

### Review of Position Analysis Questionnaire

Mr. Thornton referred meeting attendees to the document called "Classification & Compensation guide for managers, supervisors, and employees" that employees were asked to fill out.

### Maintenance of the Job Evaluation system

Mr. Thornton explained that there are nine factors looked at as part of the job evaluation process.

The job evaluation committee: the purpose of having a multi-disciplinary group is to avoid bias. The current members of the Committee are:

- Kathy Robinson
- Ray Sisk
- Tim Carroll
- Andrew Hart
- Linwood Lothrop
- Jeff Northgraves
- Laurie Bouchard (HR Consultant – until new HR person is hired to fill that position)

Judge Emery asked if any of the committee members had ever sat in on a court session. She commented that she did not understand how any of them would be able to make decisions on Probate job descriptions without having an understanding of what goes on there.

Administrator Hart stated that the whole reason for the committee was to have an ongoing process so the County would not have to do a major study like this again. The decision was made to have the committee be made up of department heads, but although not all departments were represented, those chosen to be on the committee could definitely represent all of the departments. The committee would meet if there are any new positions created and set the classification of the pay level for that position. If a department head felt that a job description needed to be changed, the committee would look at that. If it was just a minor change the committee wouldn't bother to meet. They would only meet if it was a major change. If the committee doesn't understand the reasoning behind the reclassification request, they can work with that department head to review things. The committee has had training and it is their responsibility to research and get information from all sources to make their decisions.

**IV. Recommendations**

2012 Pay Plan Structure Options:

Option 1 – Step Plan

Pages 10-12

Stephanie Laite commented that there had been a wage scale in the past and the department heads had discussed where their employees should be on the scale.

Option 2 – Open Ranges Plan

Pages 13-15

It was suggested that if the County was paying employees increases based on performance there has to be an adequate process to evaluate employee performance.

Administrator Hart commented that if the County went this route, all departments need to fully participate and there would need to be training so all departments are doing things the same and doing it correctly. If it's not done 100% then the County would be better off using the step plan.

Salary Adjustment Recommendations

Commissioner Maines commented that COLA is different from performance increases because it's related to the cost of living index (CPI).

Judge Emery asked why the judge of probate and commissioners were excluded.

Commissioner Maines thought Commissioners should still get a COLA. Commissioner Moody explained again about commissioners receiving stipends set by the Budget Committee rather than salaries.

Commissioner Parent said that when he was a state employee, COLA's were not generally done across the board; it was usually done as part of a union negotiation and it was a general pay increase. COLA's were generally given to employees with no representation, usually retirees.

Commissioner Maines asked if information could be pooled on the commissioners and judges of probate from other counties. Commissioner Moody said that would be a good idea and asked Administrator Hart to take care of that.

Going forward – Longevity (length of service)

Administrator Hart asked if it was still logical to have the Commission vote at the Regular Commission meeting in September because the County was making changes to the wage plan and if the staff were still working on collecting information, it will be hard to take a vote on the wage plan. This needed to be figured out as soon as possible because the budget process was starting very soon.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves commented that the issue is what your definition of COLA is. If the County doesn't apply COLA every year, the County would have to do comparisons every two or three years. It also needs to match the union contract(s) and it may take a few years to phase in some of these changes. Finance Director Kathy Robinson agreed that it would have to be phased in because of the existing union contract and the County will need to work with the unions to get those changes implemented into the union contracts. It's fairly unusual to have longevity be in cents vs. percentages.

Commissioner Parent asked if the Commission could get some feedback from the employees regarding which plan they prefer and why. Commissioner Moody said he would like to hear some feedback as well. Commissioner Maines said that the employees would want to know what the evaluation process was going to be. Commissioner Parent responded that there was not enough time to work on that.

Airport Manager Northgraves commented that for managers to explain this to their employees they needed to first know how the Commission would define and handle cost of living, longevity and merit, etc. He added that there is not a lot of difference between options 1 and 2 other than flexibility to include longevity or merit increases in the future (option 2).

Commissioner Moody commented that the problem he has with merit increases is usually what happens is that employees start comparing themselves to each other and they don't necessarily understand the process from which the differences between employees have arrived. There's some benefit to treating all employees the same and making it clear that the employer is not playing favorites. Elements of trust and teamwork are lost if increases in pay are based on performance because of jealousy and distrust.

DA's Office Victim Witness Advocate Lynn Talbot commented that she felt like it would be difficult for employees to have filled out the surveys used in the study and yet not see the results back before decisions are made regarding pay grade as it relates to the job descriptions.

Chief Deputy Tim Carroll commented that it is critical for the employees to be getting this info now. The Budget Committee recognized that employees' pay needed to increase but the employees were promised that the compensation study would get us caught up with the rest of the counties, so the information they get is critical as to what actions are going to be done and they need to know where the commission stands on the wage plan. If it's put off even longer it will not sit well with the employees.

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop stated that he agreed that performance increases do create jealousies. If employees aren't doing their job then they lose their job, so he did not have a lot of confidence in a merit system.

Finance Director Robinson commented that any changes that are in conflict with the union contract will have to be phased in as well as negotiated and agreed to by both parties. She added that there are some things that can be implemented at the first of the year in the 2012 budget. She said that she agreed that the staff is expecting to see results and wanting to know how they will be affected by the study.

Commissioner Moody wrote the following lists on the easel while the discussion was taking place:

Decisions/Actions the Commission needs to make at September 13, 2011 Commission meeting:

1. Select pay plan- steps, or open ranges
2. CPI (as of 6/30/11)
3. Commission's philosophy on pay-per-performance
4. Adjustments to Minimum Plan
5. Range Penetration Plan
6. Adopt 2012 Wage impact guideline
7. Should job proficiency be calculated at five years or eight years? – create a county philosophy

Items to consider

1. Commissioners' pay
2. Judge of Probate's pay
3. Collective Bargaining units
4. Performance evaluation process implementation
5. Elected officials – are they in this program or not? (Judge of Probate, Register of Probate, Commissioners)
6. Job Evaluation Committee – already created and trained. Will only meet if there is a request to change the classification of a job or if there's a new position created.

Department Head Tasks

1. Share job descriptions with their staff
2. Share pay grade information with their staff
3. Provide pay range information by job class to employees
4. Individual pay for each job – as proposed
5. If department heads have any changes they want made to the most recent "clean" versions of the job descriptions before the commission approves them at the September meeting, get those changes to Laurie ASAP – preferably Monday since she will be in the Administrative Office that day.

Tasks for Laurie Bouchard and Gary Thornton to do

1. Calculations for ten steps with five years proficiency with the philosophy of getting people to the mid-point that are currently below it.
2. Look at whether lowering health insurance to market rate and pay market on dental and long-term and short-term disability to see if it's really a wash-out. Kathy would have to contact providing companies to find out costs.

## V. Job Descriptions

Discussion of review/approval process

Ms. Bouchard briefly listed the steps taken during this process:

1. Started with existing job descriptions which were marked up by employees and managers.
2. Put them in a standard format and filled in missing pieces.
3. Employees filled out questionnaires which were used to update the job descriptions.
4. Consolidated duties/responsibilities.

## VI. Outstanding Questions/Comments

## VII. Other Items

A follow-up meeting was scheduled for Monday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> at 8:00 a.m. to discuss the information presented today and to receive further information requested of Ms. Bouchard and Mr. Thornton.

## VIII. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 12:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Candice Richards  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on October 11, 2011.**