

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting – Work Session

Tuesday – September 8, 2009 - 12:00 p.m.

A special meeting – work session of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, September 8, 2009, at 12:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. Administrative Assistant Candice Richards 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, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards (*work session only*), and Finance Director Kathy Robinson (*work session only*).

Special Meeting – Work Session – Agenda Tuesday – September 8, 2009 – 12:00 p.m.

- I. 12:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 12:01 Executive Session**
 - 1. Convene in Executive Session to discuss Labor Negotiations pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D).
- III. 12:30 Discussion Items**
 - 1. Update on information from municipalities re: assessors, road engineer
 - 2. Update on Space Needs
 - 3. Discuss Meeting Frequency & Content
- IV. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the September 8, 2009 special meeting - work session of the Knox County Commission to order at 12:00 p.m.

II. Executive Session

- 1. Convene in Executive Session to Discuss Labor Relations pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D).
 - A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(D) to discuss labor relations. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The executive session convened at 12:01 p.m.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to come out of executive session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The executive session concluded at 12:56 p.m.

III. Discussion Items

- 1. Update on information from municipalities re: assessors, road engineer.

County Administrator Andrew Hart handed out the spreadsheet for the assessor's survey. Only half of the towns had responded even though reminder emails were sent out. If towns do not respond within the first few days after the initial request, they are most likely to not respond at all. It is possible that some lack of response is in part due to the fact that some of the smaller towns do not have a lot of town office staff and their offices are not always open a lot of hours. Another problem is that depending who receives the correspondence, it does not always reach the person(s) it was intended for, regardless of whether it was emailed or mailed.

The information gathered from the responding towns showed very different budgeting and assessing needs for each town. Added together, the budgeted amounts for the towns of South Thomaston, Cushing, Rockport, Camden, Hope, St. George, Rockland, Vinalhaven, and Washington totals \$430,537. Camden, Rockport, or Rockland may not want to make any changes. Rockland's assessing includes the Samoset timeshares and that is a huge part of the budget to assess. It may be possible that towns with part-time assessors could be combined and share an assessor. If a few towns were interested in starting out small together and see if that works well, other towns may want to participate. It might be good to start with five smaller towns and determine what the costs would be for the County to have an assessor. If the County had an assessment department, it would then be a County service available to all the towns and the towns would pay the fees as part of their County taxes. Assessment districts could be set up

and have it be a self-funded separate accounts on the books, just like the airport. If towns wanted to participate in the district, they could sign a contract.

Some towns still think the County wants to take things away from the towns. Some may not mind having a contract with the County to provide the service. The County could also just act as the bid solicitor to help the towns set up the service, but not provide it for them.

Peter Crichton in Cumberland is still trying to set up an assessor’s department to cover the whole county and so far it has not happened.

It is possible that Jim Murphy may be interested in becoming a County employee. The County would need a contract, which could include benefits.

Commissioner Richard Parent is still receiving phone calls from people about ambulance services. Each ambulance run can tie up four hours because of the amount of paperwork that has to be done for each run. There are volunteer ambulance services with not enough volunteers to do it. Billing for ambulance services can be complicated, especially if the persons receiving the services do not pay their bills.

Assessor Survey results so far:

Municipality	Assessor's Agent	Amount Budgeted for 1 Year	Days per Week Working
South Thomaston	Horace "Bert" Taylor	\$26,928	96 days per year (amounts to about 2 days per week)
Cushing	Garnett Robinson	\$25,570	1 day per week
Rockport	Judy Mathiau	\$57,519 (total dept. cost: \$111,001)	Full-time
Camden	John Doan	\$61,668	Full-time
Hope	Vern Zeigler	\$13,800	32 days per year
St. George	Parker Appraisal Co	\$11,840	Only when needed, a half-time assessing clerk deals with clerical items
Rockland	Dennis Reed	\$147,824 for the department	Full-time
Vinalhaven	Jacqueline Robbins	\$24,906 budgeted, but she is also the CEO and LPI	2 days per week, more if needed
Washington	Stanley Millay	PT \$15/hr up to \$7,000	Part-Time

Road Engineer Survey results so far:

Municipality	Interested?
South Thomaston	Yes
Hope	Yes
Rockport	Yes
Rockland	Yes
Vinalhaven	Yes
Washington	Yes
St. George	No
Cushing	No

The towns of Union, Warren, and Thomaston should be contacted again for this information since they did not reply to either survey and are larger towns so their opinions are vital. The Administrative Office will try to make contact to get the information.

2. Update on Space Needs.

County Administrator Andrew Hart explained that he has been unable to have a meeting of the three department heads because of conflicting schedules. This is currently a very busy time for everyone.

The space needs process may be impacted by the possibility that the function of the jail would change to a type of facility which would result in less prisoners in the jail at a time compared to now. That would mean there would be more room in the jail for other uses. It is possible that the Knox Jail could become a 72-hour holding facility, a facility for mental health inmates, or just house only women. Even if space opens up at the jail for other uses, there will be costs if any renovating needs to be done, but that would depend on what kind of facility the jail ended up being designated as. It is possible that the Communications department could have more room and be isolated enough to have its own entrance to limit access. Even though the jail bond is paid off and the County will no longer need that amount of money going towards the jail bond, the courthouse is in need of repairs and upgrades that the money will be used for. At this time, the costs are not completely known.

There was a discussion about towns in Kennebec County going to other counties for their dispatch services because Kennebec County is joining the state facility and the towns want other options. State-run centers are not run well and cost the towns a lot of money.

There was a discussion about whether the space needs and the possibility of combining dispatch with another county should be discussed at the next work session. It was suggested that the County would first have to decide what would be done with the KRCC. It is unlikely that the towns of Knox County would support going to Lincoln County for dispatch services. The Advisory Committee would need to be part of that discussion. It was suggested that it is possible that if the County does not at least explore other options, the County will be unable to defend what the Commission’s choices to the towns. It was decided to lower the priority on that discussion and concentrate on space needs for now but that when the Commission meets with Lincoln County to discuss the issue at some point, the Commission will invite members of the Advisory Committee to attend the meeting

3. Discuss Meeting Frequency & Content.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center explained that four hours every two weeks might not be something we want to pursue for work sessions. She suggested separating the work session from the regular Commission meeting so that the regular meeting took place on its regular day, and the work session would take place two weeks later. That way the Commission still meets every two weeks. Regular Commission meetings will be from 2 – 4 p.m. and Special Commission meetings will start at 1:30 p.m. With the budget process starting and everyone busy with other meetings, it makes sense to cut back Commission meetings.

September 22nd was suggested as a tentative work session meeting 1:30 p.m. Administrator Hart was unsure if he would be available due to the budget process. A decision will be made later. The next Regular Commission Meeting is Tuesday, October 13th at 2 p.m.

IV. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on October 13, 2009.

Anne H. Beebe-Center, Chair – Commissioner District #1

Richard L. Parent, Jr. – Commissioner District #2

Roger A. Moody – Commissioner District #3