

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Wednesday – October 20, 2010 - 1:00 p.m.

A special meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Wednesday, October 20, 2010, at 1:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Anne H. 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, Executive Assistant Constance Johanson, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Patrol Administrator Tim Carroll, Jail Administrator John Hinkley, Building Maintenance Supervisor Jon Grout, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, Registrar of Deeds Lisa Simons, Registrar of Probate Elaine Hallett, DA Prosecutorial Assistant Shane Riley; DA Legal Secretary/Systems Administrator Kelly Perry; and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Others in attendance: MRI Consultants Andrew Gilmore and Don Jutton, President and Founder of Municipal Resources, Inc.; Michael Loewe, Lion Mobility Consulting Services; Budget Committee members A. Mason Johnson, Jr., Ann Matlack, Dorothy Meriwether, Tina Plummer, and Bob Duke; Reporter Steve Betts of the Herald Gazette (*Stayed just long enough to get a copy of the report at the very beginning of the meeting*); Reporter Heather Steeves of the Bangor Daily News; and Carol Maines, Candidate for Commissioner, District Seat #1.

Special Meeting – Agenda **Wednesday – October 20, 2010 – 1:00 p.m.**

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| I. | 1:00 | Meeting Called To Order |
| II. | 1:01 | Action Items
1. Municipal Resources, Inc. Presentation of the Final Report of the Organizational Study of Knox County. |
| III. | 2:00 | Executive Session
1. Convene in Executive Session to Discuss Acquisition of Real Property pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(C). |
| IV. | | Adjourn |

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the October 20, 2010 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. Action Items

1. Municipal Resources, Inc. Presentation of the Final Report of the Organizational Study of Knox County.
Andrew Gilmore introduced himself as representing Municipal Resources, Inc. The company is based in Meredith, New Hampshire. Don Jutton, founder and president of the company, was also in attendance.

Mr. Gilmore explained that MRI consultants had spent time interviewing commissioners, employees, and the county administrator, both in person as well as numerous phone interviews. A lot of time as also spent collecting and reviewing documents and data research. The consultants made observations and comparisons based on all that information. The job is to now explain what the recommendations are.

The following is the PowerPoint presentation as presented by Mr. Gilmore, along with additional comments he made as he moved through the slides:

PowerPoint Presentation:

Knox County Organizational Study Key Findings & Recommendations

For some background information, Mr. Gilmore explained that MRI was founded in 1989 by company President Don Jutton. The employees of MRI are either former or current municipal and

county employees. Mr. Gilmore explained that he and Mr. Jutton were at the Commission meeting to present the major findings, or highlights, of their report.

Purpose of Study

County's Request for Proposals (RFP):

"...review and comparison of county services, operations, staffing, and overall efficiency with counties of similar size and makeup. This review and comparison, combined with organizational expertise, is to be developed into an in-depth analysis resulting in recommendations for overall county and specific departmental improvement and development."

Two Major Objectives:

1. Assist the County to obtain maximum value for its limited tax dollars.
2. Provide information that helps the Commissioners, County Administrator, department heads, and regional leaders to develop and execute plans that best meet the County's needs within available resources.

MRI representatives meet with the departments, conducted numerous interviews, collected information, and conducted document review at both County and State level (including other counties) to start out the study by seeing where Knox County stacks up to five other comparable counties. That created the foundation for the rest of the study.

For each department of Knox County, a specialist working in that field, or having worked in that field, was brought in to meet with department heads and their staff and conducted interviews. For example, the MRI consultant that worked with the Deeds office is currently a sitting Register of Probate in New Hampshire and is president of their Register of Deeds Association there. The consultant for the Sheriff's office was a sitting police chief who is the head of the Criminal Justice Academy from the Southern Maine technical college. MRI used subject-specific specialists for each department of the County rather than using a general approach.

Key Findings & Recommendations

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

- Overall County operations in relatively good shape
- Like any organization, areas for improvement exist
- Recommend significant restructuring in only two departments
- "Efficiency" can be defined by:
 1. Cost savings
 2. Cost avoidance
 3. Improved quality service

The bottom line for any agency is to protect and improve our services as necessary while keeping the overall burden to the taxpayers down

ORGANIZATION WIDE

- Underutilization of Technology
 1. Major area of concern
 2. Servers, backups. Some is on site but not being utilized.
 3. Could create easier access for the public and reduce duplication of service.
- Personnel and operation policies
 1. Lacking for overall organization and individual departments
 2. Inconsistent practices & enforcement (e.g. Hiring)
 3. Affects all areas of operation from employee morale and job performance, to retention issues, purchasing and liability exposure

There is a lack of a solid foundation of policies across the board. This is a critical area for the county to look at to solidify that as a whole. That particular area effects anything from employee morale to personnel issues.
- Wage and classification scale
 1. Perceived and/or real disparities
 2. Commissioning an independent to conduct that study who is an expert on the immediate area
 3. Adopt scale

ADMINISTRATION (non-IT)

- Relatively new structure (2004 Charter Change) to Administrator
 1. Need stabilization

- High turnover and key position changes
- Single layer management, two administrative support positions
 1. Too many management demands on single position limits efficacy
 2. Not enough time to focus on all critical areas of operation
- Eliminate executive assistant position, create “junior” management position
 1. Focus on contract administration, HR, labor relations
- Move benefit administration functions to Finance
- Once position staffing structure is changed, spearhead major projects
 1. Personnel Policy manual
 2. Update job descriptions
 3. Operational policies
 4. Wage and classification scale
- Institute mandatory annual performance evaluations

The Administration office is made up of the County Administrator, Executive Assistant, and Administrative Assistant. In the last six years there has been a lot of turnover in the upper key positions but this is not unusual at the start of a major change in how government is run. Right now there is a single management level. There is no second manager or junior manager position at that level. To meet current demands for efficiency, the current structure puts too many tasks on the administrator and he is being pulled in too many directions. The recommendation is to eliminate executive assistant position and replace it with a mid-level management position to take some of the work load off of the administrator, and move benefits administration to Finance since it is closely related to payroll. The way things currently are, there is a duplication of effort. If the Commission chooses go that route, once the staffing changes, the administrator can spearhead the changes to the personnel policy and job descriptions and operational procedures, which all need to be created, updated, etc. Mandatory performance evaluations for benchmark requirements for employees is also necessary.

ADMINISTRATION – Information Technology (IT)

- Highest area of concern for organization
- Major deficiencies in basic network design, management, stability & protocols
- Limited and inconsistent data backups
- Decentralized file/data storage (on local desktops) has high risk of data/records loss
- Lack of core critical policies
 1. Disaster recovery plan
 2. Acceptable use
- In-house quasi-department not a cost effective or efficient model
 1. Industry averages = one IT staff per 125 workstations
 2. Knox County = one IT staff per 35 workstations
- Current model not serving basic needs of individual departments or organization as a whole
- Consider partnering with school system, outsource entire function, or one in-house staff (FT or PT?) with outsourced services

Typically, municipalities and counties are 15 years behind the private sector but Knox County needs to make some serious leaps. Protocols needs updating. There needs to be a disaster recovery plan in place in the event of a catastrophic failure. Productivity and efficient staff resource time should be a very high priority. Knox is the only county of the six looked at that has two in-house IT staff. It is difficult for in-house IT staff to stay on edge of cutting technology and keep pace with the industry. The current model is not meeting the basic needs. The County should consider partnering with the local school systems which are well in advance of where municipalities and counties are because they have to keep up with education. Schools have better equipment, better trained employees, and it may be possible to partner with them. If this is not possible, it may be better to outsource this function instead of keeping in-house IT staff.

AIRPORT

- Well managed, well run operation.
- Staffing
 1. Hiring a third maintenance person.
 2. Senior maintenance position should be assistant manager/maintenance supervisor.
- Need to improve system for FAA reimbursements for major projects
 1. Hurting county’s cash flow – TAN borrowing – county has to foot bill first and then gets reimbursed. County’s cash flow needs to be improved to avoid borrowing money.

Wonderful access to the local area and provides essential air travel to the islands.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

- Staffing schedule is opposite of efficient model (3 day / 1 night)
- Current model not efficient/cost effective and not meeting needs of organization
- Consider partnering with school system, outsource entire function, or one in-house staff (FT or PT?) with outsourced services

One of the two departments not currently efficient. Janitors are not in the building during the times when employees are out but are trying to clean when the employees and the public are in the building. This is not cost effective. No other county of the six studied has the staff level of Knox. Some counties have someone monitoring the building and outsource the janitor/cleaning services.

KNOX REGIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

- Very well run operation
- Staffing at a bare minimal level
- Dismal facilities
- Premises not secure
- Consider expanding at present location, co-locate with EOC (EMA) and relocate Sheriff's offices

The State is going through a consolidation of PSAP's. With good management and productivity, it's possible that the KRCC would be one of the PSAP's remaining, which would require more staff and need better security to handle increased call function. The department does not have a lot of room. The facility is inadequate. There was a previous study for space needs which looked at moving the KRCC, but MRI suggests leaving the KRCC where it is and instead relocate the Sheriff's offices. The cost of moving the KRCC is astronomical compared to setting up non-customized office and interview space, which would suit the Patrol department just fine.

REGISTRY OF DEEDS

- Well run department
- Good use of technology
 1. Need to expand public access for free document viewing through website (ACS)
- Need to reduce & eliminate some duplication of effort
 1. Printed books not necessary expense or use of staff resources – Docs available electronically
- Need to procure long-term book storage solution
- Staff can be reduced by one according to current anticipated workload

For a couple areas in Deeds, the public access is pretty good but could use some improvement. Do not need to print books when they are available online. Need long-term book storage. At this time, in the anticipated workload of the future, staffing could be reduced by one but MRI does not make any recommendation about which employee should be let go.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Solid management and training programs
- Future funding to sustain programming is a concern
 1. Federal funding not anticipated to stay at historical and current levels
- Relocate EOC to same facility as KRCC
 1. Currently 1.5 miles apart. Breakdown in communication links during event could seriously impair the emergency response and recovery operations
- School compliance is an issue
 1. Not all school systems in County are compliant with Maine State Law (MSA 20-A § 1001.16) requiring all schools to develop a comprehensive emergency management plan
- Staffing is thin
 1. Consider at least one additional part-time employee
 2. Need to secure and train additional backup EOC personnel

EMA has a very solid training program. The major area of concern, which is not unique to Knox County is the instability of the funding sources. A lot of money post 9/11 has gone into Homeland Security but that is not a sustainable funding source because it will diminish or disappear entirely. MRI suggests that the County relocate the EOC (EMA) to the KRCC. In the event of a communications failure, it could create some serious issues if the two departments are not close to one another. It makes sense for those two departments to collocate. Not all school systems are compliant with the law so the EMA office and Commission need to work with those local schools to

get them in compliance. The Commission could consider hiring at least a part-time person to help with training since the staff is few.

FINANCE

- Well run and operated within existing constraints
- Current staff resources are too limited
 1. Increase both 30-hour positions to 40 hours per week
- Lack of proper documentation
- Need to better utilize existing technology (accounting modules)
 1. Need IT to expand access to account software to all departments, especially Administration
- Take over benefits administration functions (BA) to streamline payroll and BA systems
- Internal controls for cash receipts needs to improve

The department currently has a 40 hour/week director, one 30 hour/week deputy, and one 30 hour/week clerk. Scheduling is a constraint and recommending both of the 30-hours positions be increased to 40 hours, which would provide significant time for financial forecasting and being more involved in contract negotiating and being as efficient as possible. The department could better use existing technology. MUNIS is not being used to its full potential; need to expand access to other departments with appropriate security protocol. Many departments are keeping their own records in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets, which is a duplication. This should be a short-term area focus. Taking over benefits administration from the executive office will eliminate duplication and avoid human error. Internal controls for cash receipts needs to improve.

PROBATE

- Need to use the dedicated surcharge fee fund for preservation activities
- Use or permanently acquire planetary camera no longer being used by deeds
 1. Unnecessary costs, delay and risk with outsourcing imaging to Massachusetts company
- Need to increase use of technology
 1. Provide public access terminals – cease unnecessary original document handling by members of the public
 2. Explore using inexpensive technology through 3rd party vendor (currently used by Deeds) to image index books
 3. Cease duplicative efforts such as file indexing with Microsoft Excel when existing onsite technology (ICON) already performs function
- Need near-term plan to secure adequate vault storage

State law allows for certain fees be set aside, which should be used to preserve services. The 3rd party outside vendor does a good job. The camera in Probate is not working so the department should have the camera in Deeds since they outsource and no longer need their camera. Public handling of original documents needs to be limited. Securing adequate vault storage is critical.

SHERIFF'S OFFICE

- Busiest of all comparable county sheriff's offices
 1. Introduce online reporting for "low-level" incident reporting
- Inadequate facilities – cramped, no privacy for investigators, interviewees
 1. Relocate office to adjacent available property as inexpensive option to relocating KRCC
- Solidify internal policies and eliminate inconsistencies in hiring and internal investigations
- Engage in strategic planning process
- Provide management training opportunities

Knox County's Sheriff's Office is very busy compared to the other five counties looked at. Knox has the highest volume of activity. Recognizing limitations on tax dollars and staff, MRI recommends that the County utilize online reporting for "low-level" incidents, which would allow residents to submit a report that wouldn't necessarily need to be responded to immediately. Staffing is just barely adequate. The department is using every square inch of the space they have but no privacy for interviews. Relocating to another facility will be significantly less expensive than moving the KRCC. A "stick-built", non-customized building for the Patrol office would be far cheaper. The department needs to solidify internal policies and has already started to do so. Some of the sample policies listed in the report are already in the process of being implemented. It would be very beneficial to engage in a strategic planning process. There needs to be more management training opportunities provided to supervisors and managers, but it is fairly common that there are limited training opportunities for law enforcement management.

Major Recommendations

ADMINISTRATION

Reorganize positions in administration

1. Eliminate executive assistant position & create junior management position
2. Move benefits administration to Finance
3. Get documented policies and procedures in place
4. Provide and increase training opportunities, primarily in areas of management and technology training
5. Create and adopt personnel and operational policies
6. Commission wage & classification study and adopt scale

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. Change IT model to partner with school or outsourced model
2. Get disaster recovery plan and other critical policy documentation in place
3. Solidify basic network and central storage infrastructure and protocols

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

1. Change current model to either completely outsourced, partnership with school or hybrid of in-house oversights with outsourced subordinate functions.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Expand and rehabilitate regional communications center (RCC), move sheriff offices to new facility and co-locate EOC with RCC.

DEEDS

1. Reduce staff by one (1) employee

FINANCE

1. Increase weekly hours of two (2) subordinate positions from 30 hours to 40 hours
2. Take over Benefits Administration

PROBATE

1. Increase use of technology and public access to electronic documents
2. Continue and intensify efforts to secure adequate storage

SHERIFF

1. Engage in strategic planning process
2. Need better, relocated office facilities
3. Adopt and adhere to solid operational policies
4. Seek and provide management training opportunities for all supervisory personnel
5. Introduce online reporting

--- End of PowerPoint Presentation ---

Mr. Gilmore ended the presentation by stating that both he and Don Jutton would answer questions.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center thanked them for their presentation. She explained to the meeting attendees that the commissioners received a copy of the full report via email on Friday. A paper copy was also sent in the mail. Department heads only received the portion pertaining to their own department, via email, also on Friday.

County Administrator Andrew Hart explained that on Friday, he had met with each of the employees in his own department because he felt that it was fair to give them a heads up before the meeting. He added that when he emailed the department heads their portion of the report, he did not direct them what to do with their employees. Some department heads, in particular those with significant changes suggested in the report, met with Administrator Hart, Mr. Gilmore, and Mr. Jutton this morning prior to the Commission meeting.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that the purpose of the meeting was to have the Commission and the department heads hear the entirety of the report for the first time. The Commission has not met yet to discuss the recommendations in the report or to determine what decisions to make. The Commission would have no comment at this point because the commissioners need a chance to digest the information and consider it. She added that the Commission would entertain any questions that the meeting attendees might have.

Mr. Jutton commented that because the presented report was just a “preliminary” report and not the final draft, it is common for there to be typos or formatting errors in the report. He said that he would welcome any corrections that the employees might find as they read it.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center suggested that there may or may not be impacts on the budget from the report. There was only a small window to make decisions before the budget has to be finalized for 2011.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that his main concern going into this process was that the report would end up not being usable; however, he felt that this report seemed like a very usable report. The Commission would now be able to set up some specific conversations and start some goal setting for review and improvement. He thanked the MRI representatives for the report and for all their work.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that she would open up the meeting for questions. Those with questions were instructed to address their questions to Mr. Jutton and Mr. Gilmore.

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that he was a little confused about EMA/EOC.

Mr. Gilmore stated that in the event of an emergency, the EMA office becomes the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). The EOC is most efficient when it’s located with the Communications Center. If the sheriff moves out of the Jail, that space would be adequate for the KRCC and EOC combined.

Jail Administrator John Hinkley commented that while he knows that the Jail was not part of the study, it still needs to be recognized that the jail administration also has space needs that were not looked at as part of the organizational study. The Jail was designed *for* the jail, and some of that space needs to be returned back to jail operations so that the jail can function as it was intended to. He asked that the Commission take that into consideration as they made decisions regarding where departments are physically located.

Bangor Daily News reporter Heather Steeves asked where the Sheriff’s Office would go if it left the Jail complex.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center replied that Patrol would relocate to a different space outside of the Jail complex but there has been no decision made on where that might be yet.

Commissioner Richard Parent commented that the report provided a lot of food for thought. He was not sure that he agreed with everything that was in the report and presented, but that it gives the Commission a lot to think about.

Commissioner Roger Moody asked Mr. Jutton for his opinion of the MUNIS software. He asked if the County should look at replacing it.

Mr. Jutton responded that he and the other consultants were comfortable with it MUNIS being used by the County.

Mr. Gilmore commented that it depends on who you ask.

Mr. Jutton added that the general opinion he has heard in municipalities and other counties using MUNIS is that they are happy with it. MUNIS is very adequately supported and the company keeps it current in terms of cost benefit to continue using.

Mr. Gilmore commented that it is really just a choice of vendor.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked if the other counties looked at by MRI are using MUNIS modules that Knox County is not.

Mr. Gilmore stated that he wanted to clarify that MRI is not suggesting that the County purchase more modules but rather the County should be using the modules already in place to their full capacity. It depends on what the County needs and what the costs are. He added that MRI was not making recommendations for expanding what the County has, but rather just expanding access to departments.

Ms. Maines asked if MRI was recommending moving all maintenance tasks to nighttime.

Mr. Gilmore replied that the recommendation was not to move all functions to night but that the cleaning functions should primarily go to the night-time hours after the majority of the staff had left for the day.

Ms. Maines asked what percentage of staff effort goes to cleaning versus other tasks

Mr. Gilmore stated that this was getting into minutia. Cleaning is a primary function and should be moved to night hours. What falls under the maintenance department needs to be looked at that and policies made for the percentage split.

Commissioner Richard Parent asked what would happen if the County eliminated the position but then later on the work load got busier. He asked if the County would then be looking at replacing the person that had been laid off.

Mr. Gilmore stated that was correct. He added that MRI was looking at the volume of work at the present time. He stated that it was possible that a few years down the road the County may need an additional employee if technology cannot cover a certain task.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

County Administrator Andrew Hart commented that if any of the department heads have some comments that they wanted to share with the Commission try to get it to us by the end of the week and try to come up with some sort of accelerated timeline for this because staffing levels effect both the employees and the budget. The County needs to decide either to accept the recommendations and move forward, or to not accept them. People are in limbo and wondering what's going to happen. He added that the budget is set up status quo and does not take MRI's report into consideration because no decisions have been made by the Commission yet.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that he was in favor of moving expeditiously but that doing it all in a few weeks may not allow for enough thinking time. He stated that he would also be interested in a specific reply from each department head stating what they agreed with or disagree with. It would help the commissioners to be thoughtful about the report. The report is well crafted but no one person has a complete knowledge of every department. Silence from the department heads could be taken as consent. Without submitting some communication to the administrator, the Commission would not know their true opinions.

Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons stated that she had voiced her opinion that morning to the MRI consultants. She did not agree with some of what was in the report. She added that she would put her opinions in writing and send it to the county administrator.

Finance Director Kathy Robinson commented that she had thought that after the department heads received their portion of the report that they would have an opportunity to get back together with the MRI consultants to discuss the report. She said that she wanted to understand what would happen as the recommendations were acted upon and what the County would need to do to implement it. She asked if the department heads should just have that discussion with the county administrator or as a group.

Commissioner Richard Parent commented that he did not see jumping at any of MRI's suggestions just to get it in the 2011 budget.

Finance Director Kathy Robinson stated that she thought some of the suggestions could make it into the 2011 budget but that some may have to wait. It is already October and the County has to have a budget that will allow the departments to operate in the next year.

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that the County may need more time or more information before being adequately able to respond to the report.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center suggested setting a meeting within the next week and invite department heads to get an idea of what they thought would work, what wouldn't work and why, and make a list of what the Commission would consider this year or wait until next year. There needs to be a time line, or sequence of events, and get input from both the department heads and the administrator. She asked County Administrator Andrew Hart if that would meet his need to move quickly.

County Administrator Andrew Hart replied that it was not that he was trying to rush the process through but that it is rough on employees to have to wait for the Commission to make decisions. It causes morale problems, stress, and productivity could crash. He said that he had met with a lot of employees who are affected by the process and their stress is visible. He added that he did not think meeting with all departments at once will be effective and that it would be better to meet with one department at a time. Most of the departments are not interactive with each other.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center commented that the administrator was right and that the Commission needed to meet with department heads separately.

Mike Loewe commented that there obviously needs to be some reflection on the recommendations in the report, but he recommended that the county administrator meet with individual departments where it may be necessary to have MRI expert there and then take that information to the Commission because a decision has to be made in the short run. The important part of this process is putting together the strategy once the Commission has made a decision so that the employees being affected will have an expectation of what will happen. The Commission needs to put forth some answers as soon as possible to alleviate anxiety. Some things can probably happen relatively quickly but others are more long-term. The County needs to lay out a strategic plan so that the report does not end up being a study that just sits on somebody's shelf. Mr. Loewe said that in his opinion, the report is excellent but that it is possible that some of the things recommended will work while others will not. The Commission needs to let the county administrator focus the direction of the process so that everybody is moving in one direction, as one unit.

Commissioner Roger Moody stated that Mr. Loewe's comments went along well with his own way of thinking. There are some inter-relationships with some of these departments and facilities and it can be difficult. He added that he understands the importance of technology but that he does not know a lot about specifics.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves stated that he agreed that the first step is to look at the list of recommendations. There are some items that everyone can agree with but some are specific to departments. The two major changes are to the building maintenance department and IT. Those two departments have short-term and long-term impacts on all the other departments.

KRCC Director Linwood Lothrop commented that hardware issues and networking issues are fine to hire out to a consultant, but with public safety records not just anyone can be given access. There has to be background checks, etc.

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves stated that anyone doing IT work at the airport is also required to have a background check done.

DA Prosecutorial Assistant Shane Riley commented that any changes made by the Commission regarding the County IT staff would also roll out to every law enforcement agency. The IT staff are currently managing the Spillman system. Public Safety information is very sensitive and must be protected.

County Administrator Andrew Hart asked if Mr. Gilmore or Mr. Jutton had any follow up comments.

Mr. Gilmore stated that just from hearing the discussion, he felt that the County was already keying into developing a strategic plan which is the near-term step. He stated that there has probably never been a report where 100% of the recommendations were embraced and implemented and MRI recognizes that. It is up to the Commission to decide what to do with it.

Mr. Jutton commented that the question to ask when looking at the recommendations is, "is it doable?" Find out if similar changes have been successfully implemented elsewhere. Solicit input from the industry and see what private contractors would do and also find out the cost per square foot. It may make sense to have some basis of comparison. Do not try to accomplish everything in the report all at the same time because it will make it too hard to see everything. The County needs to take care that it does not get sucked into job preservation issues. There are ways to work it out.

Mr. Loewe commented that there is nothing in this report that is revolutionary. It exists in multiple government agencies. Each organization has its own culture so one thing to keep in mind is how the County wants the culture to evolve and become. The report will not solve all of the problems the County has, but people need to look at it objectively.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center suggested meeting in one week, looking at what to prioritize and make a plan that will be shared with the department heads. It will include an action plan so that everybody knows what and when decisions will be made. Department heads need to share their opinions with the county administrator and be able to request if they want to talk with the Commission and county administrator. Hopefully there will be enough time. She added that someone will take notes during the meeting. The Commission could meet with the department heads during the first two hours and then the third hour, the Commission will come up with a plan and timeline.

The meeting was set for one week from today: Wednesday, November 2nd, 1pm – 4pm.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center stated that she would put together a draft of a structure for that meeting which the county administrator could then share with the department heads.

Finance Director Kathy Robinson asked if the County would have to pay MRI more if the Commission asked them to bring in the experts from MRI to talk with department heads.

Mr. Jutton said that he could arrange one meeting for no extra cost but that MRI personnel could not perpetually keep coming back. He added that MRI is happy to support what the County is undertaking, but from long distance. He stated that if the Commission reached a point where the commissioners feel stuck and need to invite some of the experts, the experts should all come at the same time. Some information can be relayed by email.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked Mr. Jutton if the Commission identified the specialists that the County would like to talk with, would it be possible for them to all come in one week.

Mr. Jutton responded that it was possible.

III. Executive Session

1. Convene in Executive Session to discuss Acquisition of Real Property pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(C).

- A motion was made by Commissioner Roger Moody go into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(C) to discuss Acquisition of Real Property. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The executive session convened at 2:40 p.m.
The executive session concluded at 3:55 p.m.

IV. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice Richards
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on November 9, 2010.