

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission & Budget Committee

Thursday – October 26, 2017 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, October 26, 2017, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Carol L. Maines, Commissioner District #1, and Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2. *Commissioners not present: Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3.*

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Candice Richards, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Geospatial Database Manager Leticia vanVuuren, EMA Administrative Assistant Donna Allen, DA Jon Liberman (*left at 5:25 p.m.*), Building Maintenance Supervisor Chris Caron (*left at 6:31 p.m.*), Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Security Supervisor Wally Tower, and Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves (*left at 6:15 p.m.*).

Budget Committee members present were: Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Shawn Levasseur, Terry Pinto, Nicholas Lapham, and Gerry Zwick.

Others present: Camden Fire Chief and Chair of the KRCC Executive Board Chris Farley; Darryl Joudrey from Siemens Industry (*left at 6:17 p.m.*); Terry Brackett, St. George Code Enforcement Officer; Tom Johnston, Washington Selectman (*left at 7:28 p.m.*); Assistant Rockland Fire/EMS Chief and member of the KRCC Executive Board, Adam Miceli; David Elwell, City of Rockland; John Dutcher, City of Rockland; Nathan Borst, City of Rockland; William Lawrence, Town Manager for Warren; Paul Cook and Jesse McCue from Maine Real Estate Management (*left at 6:31 p.m.*); and Peta vanVuuren.

Knox County Commission & Budget Committee Joint Meeting Agenda Commission Hearing Room Thursday – October 26, 2017 – 5:00 p.m.

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Bob Duke for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Carol Maines for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Public Comment**
- III. 5:05 Approve Minutes**
 - 1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of October 19, 2017
- IV. 5:10 Budget Review**
 - 1. District Attorney (Pgs 14 - 15)
 - 2. Building Maintenance (Pgs 10 - 12)
 - 3. Communications (Pgs 33 - 36)
 - 4. Emergency Management Agency (Pgs 17 - 18)
- V. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

The 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 Carol Maines at 5:03 p.m.

Chair Bob Duke asked everyone to introduce themselves to the members of the public that were present. Chair Commissioner Maines noted that Commissioner Sharyn Pohlman was listening in on the meeting via conference phone since she was out of town on business. Administrator Hart added that while Commissioner Pohlman was listening in, she was not doing any voting during the meeting since she wasn't physically present.

II. Public Comment

No members of the public chose to speak.

III. Approve Minutes1. Budget Meeting of October 19, 2017.

- Lawrence Nash motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- Commissioner Richard Parent motioned to postpone approving the minutes until the next meeting, November 2nd. Commissioner Carol Maines seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

IV. Budget Review

Administrator Hart briefly ran through the various handouts that the Budget Committee and Commission members had been given.

1. District Attorney

District Attorney Jon Liberman introduced himself and asked if anyone had any specific questions about his budget. He was asked to explain about Justice Web and what the 14% reduction is for in Computer Repairs & Maintenance. DA Liberman began by explaining that JustWare is a software program we still use. Justice Web is a program affiliated with JustWare, but at some point the DA's in the state became unsatisfied with that software so it is not being budgeted for in 2018. Finance Director Robinson added that part of the reduction is because the department was budgeting for an increase in bandwidth for the office but now that's going to be implemented later than the County originally thought so the amount in the budget was lowered.

When asked about the safety grant that was mentioned in the budget as hopefully being available to offset a portion of the purchase of ergonomic office equipment, DA Liberman responded that the County doesn't know yet if/when the department will be getting reimbursed by the grant. Administrator Hart added that the County will know before the budget gets approved.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of 466,018:

In favor:	9 (Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Lawrence Nash, Gerry Zwick, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Nick Lapham, Terry Pinto, and Randy Stearns)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$466,018:

In favor:	2 (Richard Parent, Carol Maines)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

2. Building Maintenance - Courthouse

County Administrator Andrew Hart went over a few highlights from the Courthouse Building Maintenance budget. The main topic discussed related to the HVAC project for the courthouse because it is very expensive to fix but needs to be done sooner rather than later, especially the replacement of the chiller. The following is a summary of some of the points made and discussed:

- Administrator Hart had put the 10-year lease/purchasing financing figure in the budget as a placeholder since that would be considered the “worst-case scenario”. There is also the option of a 15 year term, which was the longest term the bank would do. Nothing has been committed to and nothing has been decided on. A lot of banks won’t bid on lease/purchases.
- The life span of the new HVAC system proposed by Siemens is 20 – 25 years on average. The current system is 22 years old, which is past the 15 – 20 year average for that particular type of system. They don’t even make those types of chillers anymore so it’s very expensive to repair. The chiller is only operating at 50% because one of the two compressors has already died.
- If a lease/purchase is pursued for this project, it will likely be set up so that the payments will be in November because that’s when the County is receiving taxes from the municipalities. Earlier in the year the County is operating on the Tax Anticipation Note. Which year the first payment is made depends on when the project is actually completed. If it’s done in early 2018, the first payment would be November of 2018.
- The project, if done all at once, is expected to likely take 4 to 5 months at the most, depending on how the scheduling around the court schedule goes.
- The Building Envelope repairs project that was funded through a lease/purchase will have its last payment made in 2025, so there are several more years before that project is paid off.
- When asked why the Budget Committee wasn’t given figures or a breakdown of costs so that the Committee could make a decision, Darryl Joudrey explained that Siemens didn’t know what direction the County wanted to go in so he couldn’t provide figures. The total for the project is \$2.5 million, but if the County decides to go with a phased approach, Siemens can’t give a breakdown of costs until being told what the phases would be.
- There was some discussion about the pro’s and con’s of doing the project all at once versus doing the project in stages.
- Various suggestions were made about what a good term length would be for a lease/purchase.
- Administrator Hart advised against putting the project out as a bond because it’s a long process because you have to start the process 6 months before the election. We’ve already missed the November election. And if you do it and they vote it down, you’re screwed because who would want to do a lease/purchase after the voters already told you no? that would be suicide. It’s allowed for commissioners to do a lease/purchase in statute.
- After several comments were made that the County had surprised the Committee with this repairs project, Administrator Hart explained that the issues with the HVAC system wasn’t something that the County knew about a while ago. He didn’t wait to spring it on the Budget Committee. The County didn’t realize how bad the situation was with the HVAC system until very recently. Things were being bandaied and the County and Budget Committee kept putting off putting funding in past budgets to get things repaired and now it’s gotten to the point where it needs to be done, period, and it’s going to cost more because of that.
- It was noted that at least 50% of the Building Maintenance Supervisor’s time is spent on HVAC issues and that Siemens is in the courthouse an average of 5 days a week because of all the issues. Those extra costs would go away once a new system is installed.
- When asked if anyone had talked to Efficiency Maine, Mr. Joudrey stated that they haven’t yet because the County is just at the beginning of this process and he didn’t know yet what direction the County was going to go with the project. Also, he didn’t think that the courthouse consumes enough power to save anything with Efficiency Maine.
- Budget Committee members commented that they agree the work needs to be done but wanted to find a way to soften the blow to taxpayers. It was noted that just by changing the cost for the term in the budget from 10 years to 15 years automatically cuts around \$80,000 from the budget. Administrator Hart will check with banks and see if a longer term is possible, though it

was noted that the County probably wouldn't get a good interest rate on terms longer than 15 years.

- There was a discussion about the benefits of putting aside money each year in the budget to save for large projects such as this, which keeps the budget more level rather than having large spikes, but it was also noted that any time the Budget Committee needed to make cuts in the past, that type of funding was the first to be cut in order to lower the budget.

Mr. Joudrey explained that the project could be done in phases but in the end it will cost more. If the whole project is done at once, it'll be closer to \$2.2 – \$2.3 million, but if you split the project up, it'll end up being around \$2.5 million total because you end up having to redo some portions because of the controls being connected to both. Mr. Joudrey explained that Siemens is willing to work with the County to come up with more specific pricing breakdowns but noted that Siemens isn't even the selected vendor. In fact, no vendor has been selected yet. Siemens has already spent \$8,800 doing the 50% drawings for the project in order to give the County a basic idea of the costs. Mr. Joudrey stated that Siemens can't continue to incur costs with no commitment from the County, but said that if the County signs a letter of intent, Siemens can keep working. If the County chooses to go with another vendor, the County will have to pay for the drawing Siemens already did.

When asked about bids for janitorial services. Administrator Hart explained that the bid hasn't been awarded yet but the lowest bid figure is what's in the budget. The other two bids were almost double that.

- Rather than calling for a straw vote, Chair Duke asked Administrator Hart to recalculate the building maintenance budget using the 15 year term instead of the 10 year term that was currently in the budget draft.

3. Building Maintenance – Public Safety Building

County Administrator Andrew Hart and Building Maintenance Supervisor Chris Caron went over a few highlights from the Public Safety Building's Building Maintenance budget:

- The plumbing line was increased because there was only \$500 in the 2017 budget and the first plumbing issue that happened cost more than the whole budget line.
- Janitorial for the Public Safety Building and the Airport is being held for one more year at same price. The County will go out to bid again for all three facilities after that.
- Ground Maintenance – includes funding for painting and crack sealing in the parking area needs to be done, probably early summer next year.
- Electrical Repairs and Maintenance – in 2017 there was only \$500 in the budget and the County has already spent \$3,000 so far this year.
- Heating Repairs and Maintenance went up because the County now has a comprehensive maintenance agreement with Siemens.

Administrator Hart explained that these increases are based on what the actual expenses are. The County didn't budget enough for 2017 so expenses running over.

Since the issue of what other projects might come up in the future had been raised, Commissioner Maines commented that the Commission had looked at a proposal for solar panels for the Public Safety Building roof but had not made any decisions. It may come up again in the future.

When asked why a lot more is being spent in 2017 than was budgeted for and whether the 2017 budget should have had more funding in it, it was explained that some of it was from doing a better job of classifying purchases so maybe some had been taken out of other lines in a prior year. Also, there were a lot of maintenance activities that weren't happening when Mr. Caron started working here in late 2016. That should level out now that a lot of repairs have been made. Costs have also increased as

warrantees have ended. Finance Director Robinson also noted that the majority of the overrun in the Electrical Repairs and Maintenance is for the AC units that had to be purchased in the middle of the night when the AC system at the Public Safety Building died in order to protect the server room with \$80,000 of equipment in it that has to stay below a certain temperature.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$71,204:

In favor: 9 (Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Lawrence Nash, Gerry Zwick, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Nick Lapham, Terry Pinto, and Randy Stearns)
 Against: 0
 Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s budget recommendation of \$71,204:

In favor: 2 (Richard Parent, Carol Maines)
 Against: 0
 Abstained: 0

4. Communications

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop was present to answer questions about his budget.

- As with other departments, the question was raised as to why so much overtime was being budgeted for when the department was up to staff. It was explained that besides the need for covering vacations, sick time, training, mandated shifts for bad weather events or planned events like festivals or patrol’s special details, etc., there had also been an error in the 2017 budget from when various overtime lines were combined, which resulted in \$19,000 being inadvertently left out of the budget. Rather than trying to throw that back in at the last minute before the 2017 budget was approved, it was decided to leave it out since the deficiency could be covered by still having some vacancies. Now that the department is up to staff, the funds need to be put back in there.
- There was a brief discussion of whether or not the County could charge a fee to private events like the Lobster Festival. Director Lothrop has tried in the past and told no.
- After the suggestion was made to use undesignated fund balances (surplus) to lower the County budget rather than funding the capital items in Director Lothrop’s budget proposal, it was explained that Communications surplus can only be used for Communications. Director Lothrop also explained that the projects in the capital items do need to be done in 2018. He briefly reviewed the items:
 - Redundant Microwave Path from Benner to Coggins – a project being spread out over a 5-year period; provides a microwave repeater as backup.
 - Remote IP Monitor for Tenants Harbor site – allows the County to do diagnostics remotely so the technicians know what they’re dealing with before they go out there.
 - Computers and monitors need to be replaced; they are on a 5-year replacement plan. They’re used 24/7. Changes in software and technology have meant that the County has to keep upgrading to meet the five year window. The monitors are dying and the new ones are larger which will make it easier for the split/screen that dispatchers need to do with the new protocols.
 - Replacement batteries for Ragged Mountain backup system.
 - Software upgrades for a laptop allows staff to use the laptop as a full console away from the comm. Center.

- Paging encoder for the trailer that allows the County to dispatch out of a trailer if something were to happen like what happened with another county where they lost the ability to dispatch because of a lightning strike.
- Finance Director Robinson was asked about where the department would fall at the end of 2017 in terms of meeting the 2017 budget limits since the Budget Committee had cut the Communications budget by \$40,000. The question was whether the cut had harmed the operations of the department or whether the Budget Committee had done the right thing by making the cut. Director Robinson said that she hasn't looked at that yet but that the department is operating with the budget that was approved, which ended up being \$40,000 less than the original request. The surplus Director Lothrop spent last year on capital items were the amounts approved as part of the budget; the surplus was not used for the operating budget. Director Lothrop stated that he didn't anticipate going over the 2017 budget because the department spent a portion of the year with less staff. Director Robinson noted that the department is unlikely to go over budget anyway because the department spent the year operating within the budget amount that was approved.

Chair Duke asked Director Lothrop to speak about the deputy communications director position in the budget. Director Lothrop briefly explained about the need for the position because a lot of his time is spent dealing with technology changes and unfunded mandates that will soon impact the Center. The role of the deputy director would be handle to handle internal management issues and help the staff, handle recruitment, discipline, labor management, etc., freeing the Director up to tackle the technological issues coming to communications. Administrator Hart noted that in 2018, the KRCC Executive Board is going to do an in-depth review of the overall operations of the Center because that hasn't been done in a long time. The deputy director position is key to maintain the Center so that the director can address the technology issues. Director Lothrop reminded everyone that the position was originally a dispatcher position that was already approved in a prior budget and was reclassified. Cutting \$40,000 out of his budget in 2017 effectively eliminated a position already approved. He said he would offer spending surplus to fund the position in 2018 and then come back in 2019 once we know exactly what we need.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$1,191,660:

In favor:	3	(Dorothy Meriwether, Gerry Zwick, Nick Lapham)
Against:	6	(Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Terry Pinto, and Randy Stearns)
Abstained:	0	

One of the Budget Committee members that voted for the Communications budget as presented asked why the others who voted against it were opposed to the budget. Some of the comments made included feeling uncomfortable with a 12% increase over the 2017 budget and a lack of support for the deputy communications director position.

Administrator Hart stated that regardless of what the position is called (deputy director, operations director, etc.), the funding for it really need to be in the budget to give the County time to review the KRCC operations and come up with a true plan for 2019. He noted that Wally Tower, who has recently been helping in the Center, was present at the meeting. He said that he felt it was important to hear from Mr. Tower since he's been working in the dispatch center and has seen the issues first hand.

Mr. Tower explained that he is not a dispatcher, and is actually the Security Supervisor for the Airport, but has been spending time in the KRCC recently on a temporary basis. He explained that he is the former Deputy Police Chief in Rockland. He had been asked, as someone with a fresh point of view, to spend time in the Center and help the Administration to uncover what the various issues are. He said

that technology as it pertains to dispatch and law enforcement has exploded and Director Lothrop needs to stay ahead of that. It's taking an exorbitant amount of Director Lothrop's time, and unfortunately, the operations of the Center is now suffering because of the need for Director Lothrop to stay on top of the technology changes, which is where his attention should be focused. This reason is why there needs to be an operations manager to be with the staff and support them. Other counties have 3 – 4 people handling half the amount of calls. You have 2. If someone calls in sick, then another person has to be called in to work overtime. There are licensing mandates, federal requirements, state requirements, local requirements. If the Center doesn't meet those requirements, it can be shut down. It's an astronomical amount of training for the staff.

Some comments made by Budget Committee members included the idea that the statistics and argument presented merely show a need for additional dispatchers, not an additional manager in the department. Others felt that the issue of morale in the department necessitated the development of this additional position or that the department deserved a chance to study operations and reorganize if need be. The suggestion was made that if technological changes are going to have such a large impact on the dispatch center as well as other County departments, then perhaps a person should be assigned to handle all of those issues for the entire County so that the efforts to stay on top of the changes are not redundant and the Center would not be suffering from a lack of leadership.

When it was noted that two members of the KRCC Executive Board and some other town representatives were present at the meeting, Chair Duke said that they had the same opportunity as everyone else to speak during public comment and didn't. A few Committee members spoke up and said that they would like to hear from the meeting attendees.

Washington Selectman Tom Johnston introduced himself as being the retired fire chief who was very involved in the Center when he was the fire chief. He stated that there are a lot of technology mandates coming down the pike that require Director Lothrop's attention. He said that he wouldn't want to see the deputy position eliminated and would like to see the department budgeted more than it was last year. The Deputy Director position is a needed position.

Rockland Assistant Fire/EMS Chief Adam Miceli stated that he represents the City of Rockland and the other fire agencies on the KRCC Executive Board. While the Budget Committee looks at dollars, the Executive Board looks at value - what service are we getting? The Executive Board supports this position because there are a lot of issues that need to be taken care of and Director Lothrop cannot be taken away from the technology changes that are happening. The Center can't even afford to send supervisors to training. The value the end users receive from the new position will be noticeably different. The department cannot afford to have its funding cut or the undesignated fund balances siphoned off. The technology and equipment that this system runs is extremely expensive but it is not infallible. When something fails, the County has to get it fixed ASAP because you it's unacceptable to have 911 not working. Those surplus funds give the Center the ability to respond to technological failures immediately. The County and the KRCC have no control over the unfunded FCC mandates and State mandates that have to be implemented, which include the major move from analog to digital.

KRCC Executive Board Chair and Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley stated that his concern wasn't so much the technology changes but more about the employees sitting in the Center doing the job. Months have been spent working towards figuring out how the Executive Board could help, which included meeting with the employees and coming up with strategies for improvements. Discussions have included the County administration and even working with the Chief Deputy and the Sheriff and Airport Manager when looking at having Wally Tower help out in Dispatch for a while. Wally is making things better in the Center and improving morale. Chief Farley said that that's what he cares about. It's been 20 years since the Center was first set up and now is the time to step back and figure out what's working and what needs to change. He asked the Committee to support that.

Chair Duke asked the Budget Committee if anyone wanted any additional information. No one asked for more information.

5. Emergency Management Agency

EMA Director Ray Sisk went over a few highlights from his budget.

- The number of hours being worked by the Geospatial Database Manager was increased from 20 to 30 hours. The EMA office has received additional requests for GIS assistance and the County is also going to be helping towns with census addressing and in the process update the County's e-911 data. 24 of the 30 hours will be EMA specific hours, and the remaining 6 hours are for the towns. 50% of the 24 is reimbursable from grants. The position hasn't had benefits because it was part-time, so changing her to 30 hours changes her to a full-time position with benefits. Towns have realized that this is a resource that they need, that they want, and that they can't get any other way. They're the ones asking for the increased hours. Ms. vanVuuren has a masters degree in GIS and the towns rely on her expertise and the training she provides.
- EMPG Grants have been at a static level the last few years. About 90% goes back to the EMA operating budget and the rest goes towards the expenses related to occupying about 30% of the Public Safety Building. The County asked for an increase in funding to put towards the building expenses this year but it's unknown if the County will get it. Because of the way the state does its funding, it has resulted in a lot of towns losing EMPG funding because the state overextended themselves.

Various Budget Committee members spoke up about their own towns having benefitted from the expertise of the County's GIS person and spoke in support of the position and the increase in hours. It was noted that just having access to someone with that level of expertise can give grant applications more weight when towns are applying for them.

St. George Code Enforcement Officer Terry Brackett stated that he is a budget committee member in home town so he understands what the County's Budget Committee going through in trying to keep the budget from increasing; however, he stated that the towns are really benefiting from Ms. vanVuuren's help, especially since she is an expert and those doing GIS in their towns most often are not. He added that St. George has definitely benefited from the assistance.

Warren Town Manager Bill Lawrence stated that he appreciated seeing how much time and effort the County was putting into keeping the budget low, which was something he hadn't realized before tonight. He said the he agreed with everyone who wants the GIS position to increase to 30 hours. A lot of town officials use Ms. vanVuuren's help. She trains both groups of officials and also works with them individually. He said that she is a great teacher. While Mr. Lawrence is not a great advocate of increasing the budget, in this case he supported the increase.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$93,203:

In favor:	8 (Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Lawrence Nash, Gerry Zwick, Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Terry Pinto, and Randy Stearns)
Against:	1 (Nick Lapham)
Abstained:	0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator's budget recommendation of \$93,203:

In favor:	2 (Richard Parent, Carol Maines)
Against:	0
Abstained:	0

6. OTHER

Step 16 Bonuses Discussion

Administrator Hart was asked about why some personnel lines show employees receiving Step 16 bonuses while others do not, and whether there are any standards that have to be met before the employees get the bonus. Administrator Hart responded that this was discussed at the last meeting and then explained about how that works – that employees who have been here more than 16 years and who no longer receive Step increases are potentially eligible for a bonus up to 2% paid out at the end of the year. It does not increase the base pay and it's not automatic, but it is budgeted for in case the person is deemed eligible. A couple Committee members voiced some concern that some employees might be getting bonuses automatically whether deserved or not.

Next Meeting – November 2

Administrator Hart reminded everyone that the next budget review meeting is November 2nd at 5 p.m. the departments being reviewed that night are the Sheriff's Department – Patrol Division and Jail Division.

V. **Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Randy Stearns to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Gerry Zwick. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Carol Maines. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice S. Richards
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee & Knox County Commission approved these minutes
at the next joint meeting on November 9, 2017.**