

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Special Joint Meeting**

**Thursday – November 20, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.**

## **Knox County Commission and Budget Committee**

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 20, 2014, 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, 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, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, Communications Director Linwood Lothrop, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, DA Geoffrey Rushlau, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll, Patrol Administrator Kirk Guerrette (*arrived at 5:57 p.m.*), Finance Director Kathy Robinson, and Building Maintenance Supervisor Don Decker.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Bill Jones and Stephen Carroll.

Other people present: Chris Farley, Camden Fire Chief and the KRCC Executive Board Chair; Jeff Kobrock, Executive Director of MCEDD.

### **Knox County Commission and Budget Committee Joint Meeting Agenda Commission Hearing Room Thursday – November 20, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.**

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order** (Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Carol Maines for the Knox County Commission)
- II. 5:01 Public Comment**
- III. 5:03 Approve Minutes** (Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Budget Committee, Chair Carol Maines for the Knox County Commission)
  - 1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of October 30, 2014.
  - 2. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of November 6, 2014.
  - 3. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of November 13, 2014.
- IV. 5:08 Budget Review**
  - 1. Further review of Knox County departmental budgets.
- V. Final Vote on all Department Budgets** (*in preparation for Public Hearing*)
- VI. Adjourn**

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

The November 20, 2014 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Chair Dorothy Meriwether and Commission Chair Carol Maines at 5:00 p.m.

#### **II. Public Comment**

Budget Committee Chair Dorothy Meriwether asked if any members of the public wished to speak. There was none.

#### **III. Approve Minutes**

- 1. Quarterly Budget Meeting of October 30, 2014 and November 6, 2014.  
Chair Dorothy Meriwether asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

- Tom Mellor motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Bob Duke seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Commission Chair Carol Maines asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

- Commissioner Richard Parent motioned to approve the minutes as presented. Commissioner Roger Moody seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

#### IV. Budget Review

Administrator Hart explained that he had emailed information out to the Commission and Budget Committee, including the new budget draft, at about 2 o'clock this afternoon. He briefly explained that the following items were updated in the new budget draft:

- Open Enrollment – additions to retirement, changes to health insurance and flexible benefits
- Salary Updates – changes to Sheriff and Communications due to position changes, hires and resignations
- Sheriff Revenue – updated revenue for islands and MDEA due to increase in health insurance and Workers Compensation
- Health Insurance – budgeted 6.8% increase, actual 8.35%
- Workers Compensation – budgeted 10% increase, actual 17%
- Insurance – changed budgeted increase from 10% to 8%
- Legal Expense – transferred legal expense to Communications and Airport from Administration and Information Technology
- Building Maintenance 62 Union Street Revenue – updated State Reimbursement to reflect pending contract
- Deeds Revenue – updated based on year to date figures

Administrator Hart noted that he didn't increase the amount of surplus being used in the budget – it's still at \$100,000. When asked how the Budget Committee could vote on the departmental budgets until the Committee members know how much will be taken from surplus, Administrator Hart responded that right now it's still at \$100,000. He added that he didn't put in the courthouse building repairs project yet because he didn't know if the County would use surplus to pay for it.

#### V. Final Vote on All Department Budgets

##### Administration & IT

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$488,676 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

##### Building Maintenance - Courthouse

Administrator Hart noted that the estimate for the courthouse building repairs was originally thought to be about \$550,000, but the new estimate is around \$414,500. Building Envelope Specialists believes that bids may come in for even less than that when it's put out to bid. The County currently has \$63,000 in courthouse maintenance reserves. If the County opts to phase the project instead of doing it all at once, that will increase the total costs by \$75,000 because each time workers come back they have to set up scaffolding and hire a work crew again. Once repairs are complete, BES will do an inspection every 5 years. Finance Director Kathy Robinson stated that the General Fund Surplus is currently at \$870,000, which is the 20% that is recommended that the County have. She reminded everyone that surplus is used to help with cash flow during the part of the year before taxes come in and the County receives the federal money for airport projects. Some of the surplus needs to be left alone to help with cash flow.

There was a discussion on possible funding sources for the building repair project, which included undesignated fund balances, using contingency funds, reserves or surplus, going out to the voters for a bond, building it into the County's operating budget, or a combination of any of the above. There was also

a discussion about whether it would be better to do the project all at once or do a portion of it each year, and the cost differences. Some Committee members felt that the project should be in the operating budget while others thought it shouldn't be, and let the Commission decide later where to take the funding from.

Commissioner Moody commented that he didn't feel like he could make any decisions on funding or the project in general until he sees the report from Building Envelope Specialists. Administrator Hart noted that the project could be put off for a year, if need be.

Administrator Hart expressed some frustration with comments being made about what the surplus money could and would be used for. He said that it seemed like the Budget Committee thought they had the authority to tell the Commission what to use surplus for. He said that he was stressed out and didn't know what he was doing because there were too many people telling him what to do. Budget Committee Chair Dorothy Meriwether stated that Administrator Hart was correct that the Budget Committee only has any say over the bottom line. She told him that the Committee was merely making recommendations when making comments about using reserves and surplus.

- Bill Jones made a motion to add \$100,000 in the Building Maintenance - Courthouse budget for the purpose of paying money towards the building envelope repairs, with the assumption that the rest will be taken from surplus and the Courthouse Building Reserve account. Tom Mellor seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 2 in favor (Bill Jones and Randy Stearns) and 7 opposed (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Steve Carroll, Shawn Levasseur, Tom Mellor and Lawrence Nash). The motion therefore failed.
- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$174,272 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

#### **Building Maintenance – Public Safety Building**

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$71,316 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bill Jones, Dorothy Meriwether, Steve Carroll, Randy Stearns, Tom Mellor and Lawrence Nash) and 2 opposed (Bob Duke and Shawn Levasseur). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Registry of Deeds**

Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons was asked if the Deeds Surcharge money could be used towards another line in her budget. Register Simmons referred to a statute that only allows the money to be used for restoration, preservation and recreation of existing documents, and cannot be used for the initial recording of documents. When asked what the money could be used for, Register Simmons answered that she has bought cabinets for storage and getting the vault set up, which is for preserving existing records.

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of (\$189,756) with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

#### **District Attorney**

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$426,355 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Emergency Management Agency**

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$83,034 (which includes the new position) with 5 in favor (Bob Duke, Ann Matlack, Shawn Levasseur, Tom Mellor, and Dorothy

Meriwether) and 4 opposed (Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Bill Jones, and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

### **Finance**

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$270,543 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

### **Probate**

Register of Probate was also asked about whether her surcharge funds could be used to offset another line in her budget. Her answer was the same as Register Simmons' – the money can only be used for preservation.

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$141,883 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

### **Sheriff's Department – Patrol Division**

When asked about extending the mileage on Sheriff's Department vehicles before getting rid of them, Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the department could do that, but then the department would need to budget more in the repairs and maintenance line to maintain the older vehicles, so not much money would be saved. He noted that besides the actual driving mileage, you also have to take into account probably another 100,000 miles of the vehicle just sitting idling while deputies are on a scene with lights and everything going. It's really hard on the vehicles so they wear out faster.

The possibility of using forfeiture funds to help pay for Patrol expenditures was brought up again. Chief Deputy Carroll re-explained that although the department has used forfeiture money in the past to purchase vehicles, the forfeiture funds are running out. The County doesn't get the big amounts of forfeiture money like it used to, in part because the criminals have gotten smarter and register personal property under someone else's name so the courts can't take it away. The department would rather spend the funds on an outdoor containment area to store seized marijuana plants because it's currently in the evidence room in the Public Safety Building, and you can smell it throughout the facility.

Chief Deputy Carroll directed everyone's attention to the graph that he had supplied to help answer the question from a previous meeting regarding the jump in figures from 2009 to 2013. The graph showed statistics for each year from 2009 to 2013 and the statistics for what's happened so far in 2014. The idea was to show how the statistical numbers are increasing. After some confusion over the cost sheet for the new supervisor position was mentioned, Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the expense for the position wouldn't really take effect until March because before that the department be doing the promotion process and then back hiring.

When asked for clarification of why he didn't support the additional supervisor position, Administrator Hart explained that he supported it in concept but felt that he had to look at the budget as a whole. The 2015 budget draft was already up over the 2014 budget and he couldn't support the increase. He also noted that he didn't think it was right to use forfeiture money to offset it.

Commissioner Moody commented that the major driver of the budget is the bond payment. The County has drawn down the surplus and is budgeting much more tightly. He said that if he had to do it over again, he would have tapped less surplus for 2014 so there would be more to use in 2015.

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$1,751,510 with 3 in favor (Shawn Levasseur, Ann Matlack, and Randy Stearns) and 6 opposed (Dorothy Meriwether, Bill Jones, Lawrence Nash, Steve Carroll, Bob Duke, and Tom Mellor). The motion therefore failed.

- A vote was taken on the Sheriff's recommended budget (which consisted of the Administrator's recommendation plus \$78,371 for the extra position and patrol vehicle) minus \$40,000 from forfeiture funds with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Lawrence Nash, Bill Jones and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Steve Carroll and Shawn Levasseur ). The motion therefore passed.

### Airport

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves was asked to explain which of the listed projects are mandated by FAA. He responded that all of them were mandated by the FAA. He said that he doesn't do any projects that *aren't* mandated by the FAA. When someone asked about the new airport terminal, Manager Northgraves stated that, yes, the FAA actually did tell the County that a terminal needed to be built because the current situation with trailers couldn't support the TSA and other airport needs. He said that the extension of the runway is just a fraction of the project to repair the runway that has to be done. He said that the FAA told him last night that based on the airport's current usage, the FAA recommends extending the runway by 400 feet. It will cost \$30,000 to do the portion that has to be done this year.

There was a debate about the airport needing to be self-supporting and who actually uses the airport. Manager Northgraves stated that the airport does have the potential to become self-sufficient, but the way that that happens is with extending the runway and building hangars. After the comment was made that the airport is for the benefit of the wealthier people in the community and the people living in Appleton shouldn't be paying taxes on it, other Committee members and Manager Northgraves all expressed the opposite opinion. A lot more residents use the airport who aren't wealthy. Manager Northgraves added that without the airport, Christmas gifts would take longer to arrive because then FedEx and UPS wouldn't have storage facilities here.

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$129,549 with 5 in favor (Randy Stearns, Lawrence Nash, Bob Duke, Ann Matlack, and Tom Mellor) and 4 opposed (Bill Jones, Shawn Levasseur, Dorothy Meriwether, and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

### Communications

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop was asked if he could take more out of his undesignated accounts to offset the Communications budget. Director Lothrop responded that incidents like the last storm are exactly why that money needs to be sitting there for the unexpected expenses that happen because of nature and technical failure. He said that the last storm cost him \$10,000 in repairs and the winter has barely even started, so he was glad that the money was there when he needed it. He added that there's also the issue of temporary repairs to the Ragged Mountain tower and the fact that the County is still facing the possibility that it might have to move equipment to Hatchet Mountain. He said that if he used the undesignated funds to lower the budget then the money won't be there when incidents happen.

Budget Committee members expressed concerns that Director Lothrop was building up a cushion as a way to prepare for emergencies, because they felt that this was not a transparent way to budget. Director Lothrop said that he understood their concerns but clarified that he hadn't deliberately built up undesignated funds. He said that some of the money was built up from having vacant positions in the department. He reminded everyone that when something breaks, he's responsible to 39 agencies that depend on the County to provide communications services. He said that he does try to budget for predicted costs but that he still needed the undesignated funds available for emergencies.

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$1,021,072 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

### Knox-Lincoln Cooperative Extension Service

Funding request: \$57,042

- A vote was taken on the Administrator’s recommended budget of \$57,042 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District**

Funding request: \$26,673

- A vote was taken on the Administrator’s recommended budget of \$26,673 with 7 in favor (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Lawrence Nash and Randy Stearns) and 2 opposed (Bill Jones and Steve Carroll). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Midcoast Economic Development District**

Funding request: \$28,491

- A vote was taken on the Administrator’s recommended budget of \$14,246 with 1 in favor (Tom Mellor) and 8 opposed (Ann Matlack, Bob Duke, Dorothy Meriwether, Randy Stearns, Lawrence Nash, Bill Jones, and Shawn Levasseur). The motion therefore failed.
- A vote was taken on the full MCEDD budget request of \$28,491 with none in favor. The motion therefore failed.

When asked what the consequences would be for the County if it didn’t fund MCEDD, Executive Director Jeff Kobrock answered that EDA support would be at risk. He said that the EDA won’t consider any application for a job creation project without funding and MCEDD won’t be able to provide the core services without funding from counties. When asked if the towns that use his services could just pay for the help they needed, Director Kobrock said that he couldn’t answer that question because it’s a policy issue, and right now MCEDD is using a county-based model, not municipal. To the question of whether Lincoln County or Waldo County was financially supporting MCEDD, Director Kobrock responded that in 2014 Waldo County funded half of MCEDD’s request. Lincoln County just had a \$5,000 contract for services and will do something similar in the coming year. It was noted that Lincoln County already has its own economic development department with a budget of \$182,000.

- Bob Duke motioned to fund MCEDD with \$10,000. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 4 in favor (Bob Duke, Tom Mellor, Lawrence Nash, and Dorothy Meriwether) and 5 opposed (Randy Stearns, Bill Jones, Shawn Levasseur, Steve Carroll, and Ann Matlack). The motion therefore failed.
- Shawn Levasseur motioned to fund MCEDD at \$0. Steve Carroll seconded the motion. A vote was taken with 5 in favor (Steve Carroll, Randy Stearns, Bill Jones, Ann Matlack, and Shawn Levasseur) and 4 opposed (Dorothy Meriwether, Lawrence Nash, Bob Duke, and Tom Mellor). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Mid-Coast Regional Planning Commission**

Funding Request: \$2,500

- A vote was taken on the Administrator’s recommended budget of \$2,500 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

#### **Restorative Justice**

Funding Request: \$15,000

There was a brief discussion about whether this was a function of County government and what it might open the door to for other organizations requesting funding if this one was supported.

- Ann Matlack made a motion to fund the full Restorative Justice budget request of \$15,000. Tom Mellor seconded the motion. A vote was taken on with 4 in favor (Tom Mellor, Ann Matlack, Dorothy Meriwether, and Randy Stearns) and 5 opposed (Bill Jones, Bob Duke, Shawn Levasseur, Steve Carroll, and Lawrence Nash). The motion therefore failed.
- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$0 with 5 in favor (Bill Jones, Bob Duke, Shawn Levasseur, Steve Carroll, and Lawrence Nash) and 4 opposed (Tom Mellor, Ann Matlack, Dorothy Meriwether, and Randy Stearns). The motion therefore passed.

#### **Insurance – Risk Management Pool**

Administrator's proposal: \$92,592

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$92,592 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

#### **Debt Service**

Administrator's proposal: \$225,531

- A vote was taken on the Administrator's recommended budget of \$225,531 with all in favor. The motion therefore passed.

#### **Public Hearing**

The Public Hearing on the draft of the 2015 Knox County Budget will be held on Thursday, December 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m. in the Jury Assembly Room on the first floor of the Courthouse.

## **VI. Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Tom Mellor to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Randy Stearns. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The Budget Committee meeting adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Commissioner Moody made a statement that he felt commissioners were being left out of the process. He said that the Budget Committee makes their decisions and doesn't even ask the commissioners for their opinions. He said he was disappointed that the Committee had voted to not fund MCEDD and he didn't know if he could support the budget as it is. Budget Committee members spoke up and said that they didn't realize the commissioners were feeling left out of the process. It was commented that it's an open meeting and the commissioners need to just speak up and participate. There was a discussion about budget procedure for how the Commission could override the Budget Committee if they disagreed. One the Committee votes on the budget, the Commission can override them, but the Committee could then override the Commission if the Committee has 2/3rds vote to do so.

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

The Commission meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Candice S. Richards  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission  
approved these minutes at their meeting on December 11, 2014.**