

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

## Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – November 6, 2014 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 6, 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, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Patrol Administrator Kirk Guerrette, Detective Supervisor Reggie Walker, Detectives Dwight Burtis and Don Murray, Sergeant John Palmer, Patrol Deputies Paul Spear, Nate Jack, Jeremy Joslyn, John Hansen, Paul Pinkham, Patrick Polky, Rob Potter, and Arthur Smith (*left at 6:20 p.m.*).

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Bob Duke (*arrived at 5:11 p.m.*), Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur (*arrived at 5:07 p.m.*), Bill Jones and Stephen Carroll.

### Knox County Commission and Budget Committee Joint Meeting Agenda Commission Hearing Room Thursday – November 6, 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, Commission Chair Carol Maines for the Knox County Commission)
  - 1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of October 23, 2014
- IV. 5:05 Budget Review**
  - 1. Probate (Pg 18)
  - 2. Registry of Deeds (Pg. 12)
  - 3. Sheriff's Office – Patrol Division (Pg 20)
  - 4. Airport (Pg 23)
- V. Adjourn**

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

The November 6, 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 23, 2014.

Chair Dorothy Meriwether asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

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

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

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

#### **IV. Budget Review**

Administrator Hart briefly explained the handouts that had been placed on the table for everyone.

Bill Jones commented that he didn't understand why some of the investment accounts are earmarked and others aren't so he wanted to know if that could be explained. He said that if no one else was interested in having that discussion he would just go over it with Administrator Hart at a different time so as to not hold up tonight's meeting. Administrator Hart responded that if the Committee wanted to discuss it, he would just prefer to review the departmental budgets first so it wouldn't hold up any department managers attending the meeting.

##### **Probate**

Register of Probate Elaine Hallett noted that there are not a lot of changes in her budget. Revenue from Probate fees is up by \$5,000. There were a few large estates processed, and since the amount of the fees is based on the worth of the estate, that has increased the revenues.

When asked if Probate was moving to utilizing online resources for statutes and reference material, Register Hallett said that she had looked into it, and for her use, it actually cost more than what the department was already purchasing for printed publications. She added, however, that she has cut back on the number of books that her department purchases.

- A consensus vote was taken on the Probate budget with all in favor.

##### **Registry of Deeds**

Register of Deeds Lisa Simmons stated that she had thought that increasing the recording fees up to \$6.00 would increase the revenues; however, the revenues ended up going down, in large part due to the public now being able to get copies of deeds online for free. Register Simmons also thought it was just a sign of the economy. She said that the department is still recording a lot of documents. Everyone had been given a spreadsheet showing the trends in Deeds revenues from 2005 through the end of October of 2014.

Administrator Hart briefly explained to the newer Budget Committee members about the MacImage lawsuit that had led to legislation that gives each person the first 500 copies of deeds on the website for free, and also gave the Registry of Deeds the ability to increase their recording fees.

When Register Simmons was asked if she could do anything to get around people having free access to the website or not have a website at all in order to get back revenue, both Register Simmons and Administrator Hart explained that Knox County is unable to do either of those suggestions because they have to follow the law. Commissioner Moody added that only the legislature has the power to change things.

When asked about how things were going with the current staffing level, Register Simmons said that it's going well but that she sometimes has to have the part-timer work more hours to keep up, especially if one of the other staff is on vacation.

- A consensus vote was taken on the Registry of Deeds budget with all in favor.

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

Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the majority of the patrol division was present for the meeting because he wanted to introduce the employees to the Budget Committee and Commission. He briefly read each person's name, title, and some personal and professional information about each one, including those who were not present at the meeting.

Criminal Justice Division

Detective Lieutenant Reggie Walker, Detective Justin Twitchell, Detective Dwight Burtis, Domestic Violence Coordinator, and Detective Don Murray

Patrol Division

Lieutenant Kirk Guerrette, Sergeant John Palmer, Deputy Jeremy Joslyn, Deputy John Hansen, Deputy Paul Pinkham, Deputy Nate Jack, Deputy Arthur Smith, Deputy Rob Potter, Deputy Paul Spear, Deputy Lance Mitchell, Deputy Matt Elwell, Deputy Max King, Deputy Patrick Polky, and Deputy James Moore.

Referring to the draft 2015 Patrol budget, Chief Deputy Carroll noted that he and the Sheriff had cut as much as they could out of expenses without sacrificing too much in training or resources that the department needs. He said that EMA is helping the department with purchasing body cameras for the deputies through grant funding. He said that the value of the body cameras is immeasurable because they can record incidents as they happen, which is useful in prosecution, but can also vindicate deputies who are accused of wrong-doing by the public. Having the body cameras cover the times when the deputy isn't in or near the patrol vehicle. The in-car cameras are also going to be replaced on a rotating basis as they age. Four will be replaced by the end of this year through traffic security grants.

Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the department is asking for an additional supervisor position. The reason behind the request is that the statistics show that the department has seen a major increase (68%) in total reported incidents from 2009 to 2013, but the department still has the same amount of personnel (2 supervisors/sergeants) in 2014 as in 2009. It was noted that Lincoln County has 4 supervisors and they're similar in population and numbers to Knox County. Right now the Patrol Administrator is serving as the road supervisor during the day for Monday through Friday. The two sergeants are the nighttime supervisors. The department needs a dayshift supervisor for Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Twenty-six percent of all the calls for the department take place on those 4 days, and right now 3 of those days do not have a supervisor on the road.

A couple Budget Committee members expressed some concern about why the overtime budget was not scaled back in the department manager's budget recommendation. They felt that with the addition of the added supervisor position, the department wouldn't need to budget for so much overtime. Sheriff Dennison explained that the new supervisor would be working in addition to the other people already working the shifts, not replacing them, so the use of overtime is not likely to go down. Deputies end up working so much overtime because when an incident is going on, they can't just leave because their shift is technically over. The deputies also have to write up a report afterwards because often the persons involved in the incident end up appearing before a judge the next day.

Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the Vehicle replacement schedule has been three vehicles per year – two patrol vehicles (new) and one administrative vehicle (used program vehicle); however, if the Budget Committee and Commission approve the additional supervisor request, all three vehicles purchased in 2015 would have to be new patrol cruisers so that the new supervisor would also have a patrol vehicle. When asked about vehicle mileage, Chief Deputy Carroll explained that by the time vehicles traded in, they're at around 120,000 miles. He added that the cruisers aren't kept for longer than that because police vehicles are driven harder than vehicles driven by the average person. When asked why one or more vehicles were not being paid for with forfeiture funds in 2015 like had been done in 2014, Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the County really wasn't getting much in the way of forfeiture funds anymore because the criminals have started registering their property in another person's name so a judge can't take it away from them. The forfeiture money is getting low and will run out soon, so the Sheriff's Department and Administrator Hart are trying to use it strategically.

When asked for an opinion about Restorative Justice, Sheriff Dennison said that Restorative Justice has had good results in Waldo County. She said that Restorative Justice used to work with just juveniles but now they also work with adults. She said that Restorative Justice did work with the Knox County Jail in the past

but the inmates just aren't in the jail long enough to go through a program because they're pretrial inmates and waiting until they have their time in court. The funding back then had been in the Sheriff's Department budget. Sheriff Dennison said that at the time, she felt the County was spending a lot of money without seeing a lot in results so the project was removed from the Sheriff's budget.

Administrator Hart was asked what the percentage increase to the budget would be if the position was added to the Administrator's budget proposal since right now it is not there. The Budget Committee members wanted to know what putting the position in would do to the overall budget. Administrator Hart thought it would be about \$90,000, but added that he wouldn't know the exact amount until the data is plugged in. Since Administrator Hart had his laptop with him, he added in \$90,000 to the budget and said that adding \$90,000 increased the budget to being \$194,633 over last year increase, which would be an 11% increase instead of 6%.

There was some confusion about the best way to go about voting on the patrol budget since some of the Committee members might support the budget but not the additional position, or visa versa. It was also pointed out that that the additional position was not the only difference between the Sheriff's budget proposal and the Administrator's. In the end, two votes were taken:

- A consensus vote was taken on the Sheriff's Office – Patrol Division budget as recommended by the Administrator (does not include the additional supervisor position) with all in favor.
- A consensus vote was taken on the Sheriff's Office – Patrol Division budget as recommended by the Sheriff (includes the additional supervisor position) with 3 in favor (Ann Matlack, Tom Mellor, and Bill Jones). *A hand count was not asked for on either opposed or abstained votes.*

When asked if the Commission supported the new supervisor's position being in the 2015 budget, Commissioner Moody stated that the additional position is supported by the Commission.

*All of the remaining sheriff's department staff except for Chief Deputy Carroll left at 6:49 p.m.*

### Airport

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves stated that personnel services are up like in every other department but there's a difference between his proposal and Administrator's because of the request to increase administrative assistant's hours from 32 to 36. Contractual Services was increased by \$10,524 because of increases in electricity costs and the cleaning contract (up by \$6,456). Heating Fuel and Propane have also increased. The Capital line has increased by \$55,000. The \$65,000 is for the County's 5% share of the funding for the runway rehab. MBNA isn't putting \$100,000 into the Airport's reserves every year now so the money that was built up in reserves is gone and the revenue from passenger facility charges isn't enough to cover the County's share of the costs. \$20,000 per year needs to be budgeted in capital to pay the County's share of the projects, which does not include non-AIP eligible equipment such as lawn mowing equipment. Revenues are increased by \$84,986. Cape Air's Electricity Reimbursement was increased by \$1,520 when the County wrote up their new 4-year contract. Cape Air's Landing Fees were increased by \$11,322 and their Security Fee has been increased by \$62,000 as there has been a change in contract terms (as part of the EAS bid) that will result in more revenue. The total budget has decreased by \$5,205 over the 2014 budget.

Commissioner Moody noted that for the sake of full disclosure and transparency that Budget Committee member Steve Carroll has a contract with the County to run the café at the Airport. He stated that neither the Commission nor the County attorney felt that there was any conflict of interest. Steve Carroll commented that the conflict of interest is zero and that his relationship to the airport is insignificant compared to the airport budget. Mr. Carroll stated that it was ridiculous that the matter was even brought up. Commissioner Moody responded by repeating that the Commission agreed that there was no conflict of interest. He added that since Mr. Carroll is an elected public official, the contractual relationship with the County needed to be disclosed.

Dorothy Meriwether expressed concern about the airport's total expenditures being up 16.3%. She said that the only reason the bottom line is up 4% is because it's offset by the enplanement fees. Manager Northgraves responded that the main increase is due to \$65,000 capital investment to pay for the County's portion of the AIP projects. He disagreed with Ms. Meriwether's statement that the airport's expenses are going up and stated that the airport's budget has not gone up that much in expenses even with the loss of \$65,000 from TSA. Cape Air is paying the County \$72,000 as part of the renegotiation of their contract with the County to make up for the loss from TSA.

There was a discussion about the reason why the janitorial contract for the airport had gone up over \$6,000. It was explained that the County had put it out to bid, and that although the vendor who had previously held the airport contract was the lowest bidder, the Commission voted to go with the next to lowest bid because there had been some quality issues with the original vendor that did not improve. Some of the Budget Committee members questioned how the Commission to award the bid to a vendor that did not have the lowest bid, but the Commissioners spoke up and explained again about the unsatisfactory performance of the lowest bidder, as well as some negative feedback from the vendor's other references. Making the change to a new vendor also means that now all County facilities are being managed and cleaned by one vendor.

Manager Northgraves was asked if the County could tap into Airport reserves to offset the budget. Manager Northgraves reminded those present that his reserves are already spoken for and that the money sitting there earmarked for projects doesn't leave the account until the project is closed out, so while it looks like there's a lot of money there, it's already spoken for and cannot be used for anything else. He also noted that airport funds are separate from the rest of the County and cannot be used for anything but airport projects.

Finance Director Robinson was asked to put a date on the reserve spreadsheets so everyone would know the point in time the report represents.

It was noted that it would be helpful if the investment account sheet was labeled to show to what extent the money is earmarked so the Budget Committee would know what they could tap into. Administrator Hart responded that the review of reserves had already been done, that he and Finance Director Robinson had previously discussed the availability of funds with each department manager to see if any of the funds could be used to offset their expenses. It was noted that by law, reserve funds can only be used for the purpose for which it was intended.

- A consensus vote was taken on the Airport budget for the Administrator's proposal with 6 in favor (Randy Stearns, Bill Jones, Tom Mellor, Shawn Levasseur, Ann Matlack, Steve Carroll), 2 opposed (Bob Duke and Dorothy Meriwether), and 1 abstention (Lawrence Nash).

### **Other topics**

Administrator Hart asked for clarification on what the Budget Committee wanted to discuss relating to the reserves and the other financial documentation.

Commissioner Moody asked about pulling \$10,000 in Deeds reserves. Administrator Hart responded that he didn't have a problem with it but that he need to have the discussion with the department manager.

Dorothy Meriwether asked if a discussion about the reserves could be put on a future agenda after Administrator Hart talks to the departments. Administrator Hart stated that the Committee needed to tell him when they want to do that because he would need to invite the department managers back for that discussion.

It was noted that the meeting had included a lot of discussion topics and questions that had nothing to do with the budget. The whole process could be sped up if Committee members took their non-budget

questions to the department managers on their own time. Dorothy Meriwether asked that that anyone felt during a meeting that the discussion has gotten too far off topic, they should just speak up.

#### **V. Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Tom Mellor to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- 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 meeting adjourned at 7:55 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 November 20, 2014.**