

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Joint Meeting Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Thursday – November 7, 2013 – 5:00 p.m.

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 7, 2013, 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, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Chief Deputy Tim Carroll (*arrived at 5:32 p.m.*), Probate Judge Carol Emery, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Lawrence Nash, Randy Stearns, Dorothy Meriwether, Bill Jones, Stephen Carroll, and Shawn Levasseur. *Budget Committee members not in attendance: Bob Duke and Betty Watts (non-voting until sworn in).*

Also present were: Joseph Loble, President of the Knox-Lincoln County Extension Service; Nadine Reimer, Staff Educator of the Knox-Lincoln County Extension Service; and Mark Hedrich, Chair of the Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District Board.

Knox County Commission and Budget Committee

Joint Meeting Agenda

Commission Hearing Room

Thursday – October 31, 2013 – 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 Budget Review**
 - 1. Knox-Lincoln Extension Service (pp. 21)
 - 2. Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water District (pp. 21)
 - 3. Time & Tide RC&D (pp. 21)
 - 4. Probate (pps. 16-17)
 - 5. Airport (pps. 22-24)
 - 6. Sheriff's Department – Patrol Division (pps. 19-20)
- IV. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 7, 2013 joint meeting of the Knox County Budget Committee and the Knox County Commission was called to order by Budget Committee Vice-Chair Dorothy Meriwether and Commission Chair Carol Maines.

II. Public Comment

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

III. Budget Review

Vice-Chair Dorothy Meriwether explained that a request had been made to do the Probate budget first so that the Judge could leave for another meeting she needed to attend. Committee members were accepting of the change.

Probate

Probate Judge Carol Emery said that there are no big changes this year.

Commissioner Moody commented that the Administrator had proposed more revenues than the Judge had. Register of Probate Elaine Hallett explained that this was because the fees are up right now (not the dollar amount but the number of people filing paperwork) so the Administrator's proposal is an updated projection.

Judge Emery offered to give the new Budget Committee members an overview of the types of services that the Probate Court handles:

- Adoptions
- Guardianships and conservatorships for people who are not able to make decisions about their finances or wellbeing
- Name changes
- Estates / Wills (both formally when things are contested, or informally when there's no questions about the estate or will)
- Preliminary child protection orders which can arise any time of day or night
- Committals if someone has to be "blue papered" and committed in the hospital (day or night like protection orders)

Judge Emery explained that Probate is working towards requiring electronic filing of paperwork like they do in bankruptcy court. It's voluntary at this point and isn't done all over the state yet. It was supposed to be launched here in the spring of 2014 and be mandatory for attorneys, but there are still a lot of kinks to be worked out in the system so it's not certain it will be mandatory in the spring yet. Working on this project doesn't really affect the budget any.

Administrator Hart noted that there was an addition of \$150 made to the lodging line that was not in the draft that the Budget Committee had. They will see the change when an updated draft is handed out.

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

Knox-Lincoln County Extension Service

Joe Lobley, President of the KLCES said that he had come to answer any questions. KLCES had asked for a 2.5% increase to match the staffing pay increases given by the University of Maine. The organization has been flat-funded for three years. The increase is to satisfy the KLCES share of the increases in pay that the University had already given the employees who work for KLCES. The University pays for the educators and the benefits of the staff that work in the reception area. The counties pay for the utilities and half of the salary of the staff that work in the reception area (2 employees). If the university raises the pay for the employees, KLCES has to match it because it's in the union contract. KLCES is 8 years into a 15-year mortgage on the building. If there is any money left at the end of the year, it's paid towards the principal on the mortgage. KLCES is getting ready to celebrate its 100th anniversary.

Ann Matlack explained to the new Budget Committee members that the County is required to participate in this because it's in State law.

Nadine Reimer, an Extension Educator, explained that part of the funding comes from federal dollars and part of it is state dollars. The two percent is split between the two counties (Lincoln and Knox). If the counties were to withdraw, the University would end up housing the Service somewhere else. A lot of what the organization does is train trainers in the communities so they can get the work done that they want done. The programs are quite broad:

- Commercial agriculture
- Horticulture
- Parenting Education
- Master Gardener program
- Kids Can Grow
- Food Corps
- 4-H Youth Development
- Tracking change and involving citizens in environmental concerns
- Maine Healthy Beaches program
- Signs of the Seasons program
- Support fishermen and aquaculture businesses

It was noted that Lincoln County has funded them at their full 2014 request.

- A consensus vote was taken to fund KLCES at their full request of \$57,041.50 with all in favor.

Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District

Mark Hedrich gave everyone a handout to show highlights while he was presenting. KLSW has a volunteer board of 5 members and 2 paid part-time staff. The organization is asking for \$25,897, which is a 3% increase to keep up with inflation. Mr. Hedrich gave a brief overview of some of the services the organization provides:

- Technical Assistance, contractor certifications, erosion control
- Adult Education
- School-Youth Education Programs
- Traditional Conservation Work
- Provide conservation educational materials, workshops, educational programs, and one-on-one assistance to municipalities, farmers, landowners, schools, watershed associations, land trusts, and other organizations on things such as land erosion, pasture maintenance, etc.
- Hold a conservation fair at the Union Fair. A lot of middle-school kids attend.
- Hold Environ-thons for high school students
- Trout sale for people who want trout to restock their ponds

The programs that tend to bring in more money are the workshops, trout and shrub sales, and contractor certifications (certified by DEP, shows that the contractors know how to do erosion control around water bodies - shorelines). Contractors are charged \$35 for the land erosion certification. The amount of the fees come from a fee schedule set by the DEP.

When asked why the travel budget in the request had gone up, Mr. Hedrich explained that in the past, he had that amount at zero, but now the two staff members are doing so much outreach that they're traveling all the time. The expense is just mileage for their travel.

- A consensus vote on Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water's budget request was taken with 4 (Matlack, Meriwether, Nash, Levasseur) in favor, 2 opposed (Jones, Carroll), and 1 abstention (Stearns).

Time & Tide RC&D

It was noted that no one from Time and Tide was in attendance even though Peter Miller had responded to the Administrative Assistant's email to say that someone from Time & Tide would be attending this meeting. The County did not fund Time & Tide in 2013.

- Steve Carroll motioned to not fund Time & Tide's request in 2014. Randy Stearns seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Airport

Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves noted that the main issue this year is that the TSA has severely dropped the County's reimbursement amount for security at the airport. It ended up being about a \$55,000 hit to the 2013 budget and will be the same for 2014. He said that he has tried to mitigate the deficit in reimbursement in a variety of ways, including the sheriff sending a part-time deputy to help out so that the full-time deputy at the airport doesn't have to do overtime. When Cape Air's contract ends and the County goes out to bid, he will be adding in a requirement for a security fee. The lack of funding should be better by 2015, but the County will still have to find ways to fund security in 2014. He noted that if you decrease your security posture, the bad guys will find the soft-spot airports, and he reminded everyone that the box cutters and at least two of the 911 high-jackers had come through the Knox County Airport.

Manager Northgraves that the Commission had allowed him to try increasing his administrative assistant's hours from 28 to 32 hours on a trial basis to work on aircraft parking. He said that this has worked out extremely well. She also does all the advertising in the terminal. She sets the rates for it and collects the money and seeks out people who might be interested in advertising. The extra 4 hours a week is paid for by all the extra work she now does. The part-time maintenance position has also been reduced from 20 to 16 hours to help cover the change. The goal is to eventually have the administrative assistant position increased to a full-time (40 hours/week) position. He explained that while part of that is because she does produce revenue, but now that the County has the new terminal, County staff encounter the public all day long and she is the face that the public sees. She's become a true receptionist for the terminal.

The Capital Improvements include \$10,000 for purchasing grass-cutting equipment because the older machines are to the point where they cannot be fixed anymore.

When asked about the electric bill, Manager Northgraves explained that the electricity costs are down. He believes this is because he discovered that when the builders of the terminal left, they had left a fan running that was intended to suck all air out of the building if there is smoke. It not only used electricity, but it was also likely sucking the heat out of the building, which overworked the compressors. Thankfully the compressors were still under warranty so the County didn't have to pay to replace those.

Dorothy Meriwether asked about Airport surplus and reserve balances. Finance Director Kathy Robinson said that the numbers in the surplus summary and reserves that were handed out last week are accurate. Manager Northgraves noted that he has will have enough left in his reserves at the end of 2013 to fund 2014 AIP projects. The Passenger Facility Charge helps pay for the County's share of the projects. The amount you can charge for Passenger Facility Charges is mandated by Congress.

AIP Projects for 2014:

1. Obstruction easement
 2. Actual cutting of the obstructions
 3. Fixing pavement cracks, etc.
 4. Rebuilding SRE building
- Randy Stearns motioned to approve the Administrator's request for the Airport budget for 2014. Steve Carroll seconded the motion. A consensus vote was taken 6 in favor (Matlack, Meriwether, Stearns, Jones, Carroll, Levasseur) and 1 opposed (Nash).

Sheriff's Department – Patrol Division

Sheriff Dennison commented that she and Chief Deputy Carroll had worked hard to cut the Patrol budget down.

Chief Deputy Carroll briefly reviewed some Patrol statistics he handed out to the Commission and Budget Committee. He noted that the County hired some new employees in 2013, some of which he felt was in part thanks to the compensation study and the wage plan now in effect. Two deputies have been trained as DARE instructors and one more will be getting the training. The department tries to be in the community a

lot and works to have a visible presence at schools. The biggest change in the department is the way that Civil Process will be handled from now on. Instead of the \$100,000 in revenue going directly to the civil service workers, the County will hire an employee that will make an hourly wage, use a County vehicle, and the County will now get the money from the civil process fees and the mileage reimbursement.

Lawrence Nash asked for a sheet that shows the department's vehicles and mileage. Chief Deputy Carroll said that he could do that.

Commissioner Moody noted that although the department was buying three cruisers in 2014, one is being paid for out of the forfeiture money. He wondered if there was a way to reflect that in the budget for the sake of being transparent. He asked if the forfeiture could be in the budget as revenue. He noted it would also keep the expenditure line consistent from year to year instead of there being a spike next year if the department didn't use forfeiture funds to purchase a vehicle in 2015. Finance Director Robinson responded that forfeiture funds can't be listed in the budget as revenue because the funds aren't coming into the County, but a line could be put in with a footnote that the funding is coming from somewhere else.

When asked about how the deputies buy gas for their vehicles, Chief Deputy Carroll explained that the department will be participating in the Wright Express program. It's a nationwide card so it allows the deputies to gas up wherever they go instead of having to wait until they got back in Knox County.

- Randy Stearns motioned to approve the Administrator's proposal for the Patrol budget (\$1,631,002) for 2014. Lawrence Nash seconded the motion. A consensus vote was taken with all in favor.

Commissioners Pay

Dorothy Meriwether asked Administrator Hart if he wanted to wait to discuss this until Bob Duke and Betty Watts were in attendance. Administrator Hart responded that Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke had asked to have that discussion wait until he is back next week.

Administrator Hart explained that he had given everyone a news article about Androscoggin County because they've adopted a charter and looking to go to 7 commissioners and get an administrator.

There was a discussion about Lawrence Nash wanting to know what selectmen and councilmen make for stipends. Administrator Hart felt that looking at municipal stipends was comparing apples and oranges because towns are different than counties. Selectmen often wear a variety of hats for the town. Lawrence Nash asked for information on municipalities in Knox County that have administrators or managers and what the selectmen or councilmen get for stipends. Administrator Hart said that he would get what information he could.

Budget Schedule

Administrator Hart reminded everyone that the following week, the budgets for Deeds, EMA and Building Maintenance will be reviewed. Those are the last of the departments to be reviewed. He explained that he had been notified that he and the Commission Chair will have to attend a mediation meeting on December 12th, which is the tentative date of the public hearing on the budget. He said that he had spoken to Budget Committee Chair Bob Duke about changing the budget schedule a little bit. If the Budget Committee didn't finish up on November 14th, he suggested having November 19th as the "as necessary" meeting and then have the public hearing on December 5th. He noted that he and Commissioner Maines can't get out of this mediation and the judge and mediator won't allow the date to be changed. Budget Committee members expressed consent at changing the budget schedule as suggested by Administrator Hart. Bill Jones noted that he would not be able to make the public hearing if it was on December 5th, but he wouldn't have been able to attend on the 12th, either. The consensus was to go ahead with this new scheduling.

IV. Adjourn

- A motion was made by Randy Stearns to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Ann Matlack. 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 7:36 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 14, 2013.