

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – June 8, 2010 – 2:00 p.m.

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, June 8, 2010, at 2:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. Executive Assistant Constance Johanson was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Anne 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, Sheriff Donna Dennison, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, EMA Director Ray Sisk, and Executive Assistant Constance Johanson.

Also present were: Alan Hinsey of the Knox-Waldo Regional Economic Development Council (KWRED), Don Jutton of Municipal Resources, Inc., Jeff Gallagher of Rockport, and Steve Betts of *The Herald Gazette*.

Regular Meeting – Agenda Tuesday – June 8, 2010 – 2:00 p.m.

- I. 2:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 2:05 Public Comment** - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the chair.
- III. 2:30 Consent Items**
 - 1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:
 - a. Approve Agenda - Non Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
 - b. Approve Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of May 11, 2010.
 - c. Accept Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - d. Approve Reserve Withdrawals.
- IV. 2:35 Action Items**
 - 1. Act to Approve Contract Between Knox County and the Town of Vinalhaven for Sheriff's Deputy Services July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 (A. Hart, D. Dennison).
 - 2. Act on Recovery Zone Bond Request from the Town of Union (A. Hart, A. Hinsey).
 - 3. Act on Recovery Zone Bond Request from the Town of Vinalhaven (A. Hart, A. Hinsey).
- V. 3:05 Discussion Items**
 - 1. Update on the Organizational Study.
- VII. 3:15 Other Business**
- VIII. 2:15 Adjourn**

**The Commissioners will also be attending the Open House in the Superior Courtroom, which starts at 1:00 p.m. and ends at 4:00 p.m.*

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center called the June 8, 2010 regular meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:00 p.m.

II. Public Comment

Commission Chair Anne Beebe-Center asked for public comment. EMA Director Ray Sisk stated that he had a Press Release regarding the prescription drug program that the county sponsors through NACo. He reported that the program has been gaining momentum and has exceeded expectations with the average percentage now nearing the 25 percent mark for each eligible prescription or refill. Director Sisk asked the commissioners to approve the press release. It was noted that cards could be obtained by visiting the county's web site and are also available at town offices, libraries and other civic localities. The commissioners expressed their appreciation for Director Sisk's efforts to get the word out, noting that the participation in the program depended mainly on "word of mouth". The commissioners authorized the EMA Director to publish the press release.

III. Consent Items

- 1. Approve Items as Presented:
 - a. Approve Agenda - Non Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.

- b. Approve Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of May 11, 2010.
 - c. Accept Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - d. Approve Reserve Withdrawals.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the consent items as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Reserve Withdrawals (June 8, 2010):

Courthouse Computer	20000812660	\$195.00
DARE	30000810070	\$500.00
Legal Expense	20000812650	\$675.00
Sheriff Vehicles	20000812770	\$3,003.66
	Total	\$4,373.66

IV. Action Items

1. Act to Approve Contract Between Knox County and the Town of Vinalhaven for Sheriff's Deputy Services for July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011 (A. Hart, D. Dennison).
Sheriff Dennison reported that there were not many changes to the contract with the Town of Vinalhaven for deputy services.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that there were a few changes made to this contract renewal to be consistent with the North Haven contract for deputy services. One change that was noted is in section "2. Wages and Benefits". The change addresses overtime and references the union contract.

"The Town agrees that in consideration of the services provided by the County, it shall reimburse the County for wages and benefits paid to or for the Deputy(ies) assigned to Vinalhaven, or any replacement, to include wages (including holiday, **overtime**, vacation, sick leave, family leave, training or any other leave), FICA and Medicare at 7.65%, health insurance at prevailing rates, workers' compensation insurance at 3.32%, \$100.00 per week stipend, and retirement benefits at 7% commencing July 1, 2010 through to and including June 30, 2011, **all as provided in the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the County of Knox and the AFSCME Council 93 in effect on the date of this contract, Reimbursement shall be payable from an invoice submitted to the Town by the County and will be based on 50% of the expense incurred by the County.**"

The other change is to sections 7 and 8 with the reference to "transportation charges" being taken out of section 7 and being placed in section 8. It was noted that draft copies of the contract were provided to the commissioners prior to this meeting.

Commissioner Richard Parent asked if the island officials found the contract language acceptable. County Administrator Andrew Hart explained that a copy was sent the Vinalhaven Town Manager Marjorie Stratton. The question was whether to have the current board of selectmen sign the document or to wait until after the election to have the new board of selectmen sign the document. There are separate signature pages for the town and the county to sign. Mr. Hart explained that the current board approved the contract at their meeting on June 7, 2010 and signed the document. Two original contracts are being sent for the commissioners to sign.

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that having contracts renewed on a regular basis was beneficial. Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center agreed.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Richard Parent to approve the contract between Knox County and the Town of Vinalhaven for Sheriff's Deputy Services for July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Roger Moody. A vote was taken with all in favor.
2. Act on Recovery Zone Bond Request from the Town of Union (A. Hart, A. Hinsey).
Alan Hinsey explained that the commissioners had copies of the Recovery Zone (RZ) Bond Program: Project Summary for the Town of Union and the Town of Vinalhaven.

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked Mr. Hinsey to give a brief overview of the Recovery Bond program. Mr. Hinsey explained that last year the federal government passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which has generally been referred to as the "stimulus bill". These were tax exempt bonds made available to states to encourage counties and municipalities to undertake major capital projects that had been considered, but postponed because of the economy. The stimulus package is designed for "shovel ready" projects, both on the private

and public-sector levels. Knox County received an allotment of 2.8 million dollars, which breaks down to 1.16 million dollars for private projects and 1.2 million dollars for municipal projects.

Mr. Hinsey explained there have not been any applications from the private sector, although he has been actively pursuing businesses for this program. On the plus side, the bonds are tax exempt through FAME, the bank gets a huge tax break, and receives a community reinvestment credit, which translates into an interest rate of approximately one (1) percent over prime. The reluctance of many businesses is that there is a non-refundable application fee of \$5,000.00 to FAME as well as bond issuance fees, which can be up to three percent of the cost of the project. The RZ bond program is beneficial to businesses considering million dollar projects and many are not comfortable with expanding their business to that extent.

The deadline for the applications is August 4, 2010 and the deadline for the issuance of the bonds is December 31, 2010. Borrowers should anticipate a 90-day processing period for their applications.

Mr. Hinsey explained that on the municipal side the bonds are processed through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank and are designated for infrastructure project, facilities construction, job training, and education programs. Municipalities gain by obtaining lower interest rates for their projects, plus 45 percent of the total interest is paid to the municipality as a cash subsidy up front.

In Knox County two communities, the Towns of Union and Vinalhaven, have expressed interest in the program and are in the process of submitting applications. Currently, there are no municipalities in Waldo County that have submitted applications.

Commissioner Richard Parent asked what the timeframe was for spending the money. Mr. Hinsey explained that the money had to be spent within 18 months after the loan is initiated.

The Town of Union was seeking RZ Bond funding for road reconstruction and repair and replacement costs of a storage building at the town garage. The following roads are being considered for reconstruction: Davis Road, Bump Hill Road, Barrett Hill Road, Rabbit Farm Road, Clarry Hill, Clarry Hill Lane, and North Union Road. The storage building at the town garage is included in this project. Some of the road will be rebuilt and prepared for resurfacing. Other roads will need ditching and shoulder work and then repaving. The storage building needs to be replaced as it is in poor condition. These projects have been postponed for some time due to the inability to fund them. It is expected that the proposed road reconstruction project will allow the town to return to a 10-12 year resurfacing plan. The estimated cost is 1.45 million dollars of which 1 million will come from RZ bonds.

Vinalhaven is planning to pave 2.5 miles on Old Harbor Road at a cost of \$500,000.00 and is requesting that amount in bonds on their application. It was noted that the two applications totaled more than the allotted amount to Knox County for municipalities. Some counties may choose not to participate and their allotment would go back into a general pool and other counties that have applications exceeding their allotment may be able to draw from the pool. Mr. Hinsey recommended approving both applications at this time.

Commissioner Richard Parent commented that the Town of Union had a number of roads listed for repairs and with the time constraint of 18 months to spend the money, he wondered if all the road work could be finished within 18 months or whether it might take several construction seasons to complete the work. He asked if the funds were not spent, would they be forfeited. Mr. Hinsey said he did not have that information.

Commissioner Roger Moody recommended supporting both projects because there may be flexibility in the program and because of the expectation that the additional funds needed may become available.

- A motion was made by Commissioner Roger Moody to approve the Recovery Zone Bond request from the Town of Union and the Town of Vinalhaven. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Richard Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

3. Act on Recovery Zone Bond Request from the Town of Vinalhaven (A. Hart, A. Hinsey).

Note the vote the Town of Vinalhaven's request was included with the vote on the Town of Union's request.

V. Discussion Items

1. Update on the Organizational Study (A. Hart).

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that last week Municipal Resources, Inc. (MRI) started telephone interviews with some of the department heads; County Administrator Andrew Hart, Airport Manager Jeff Northgraves, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Registrar Lisa Simmons,

Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, IT Director Jeff Lake, and EMA Director Ray Sisk. Follow-up meetings are scheduled for this week. MRI has met the commissioners in person as well as a number of the administrative staff and a few of the sheriff's office staff. There are a number of MRI staff members here today to conduct interviews. MRI staff members travel to Old Town tomorrow because they are conducting an organizational study for Town at the same time. More interviews will be scheduled in the next few weeks.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that at this point he is pleased with the project and how it is proceeding. He has not spoken with county employees and prefers not to speak with anyone regarding the interviews. The interviews are between MRI staff and county staff and should remain confidential. A report of findings is expected before MRI proceeds with phase 2.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that the organizational study had been discussed at the recent staff meeting as to how the study would be conducted. MRI is making progress with the interviews and staff members are cooperating. It is expected that the district attorney's office will be available after July 4th for interviews.

VI. Other Business

1. Superior Courtroom Open House

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported sending out e-mails to commissioners and employees regarding the Superior Courtroom Open House today from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Clerk of Courts Eileen Bridges took the lead on arranging the Open House. All are welcome to go to the courtroom to see the results of the renovation project.

2. Board of Assessment Review

Commissioner Roger Moody brought up the subject of the creating a Board of Assessment Review to handle or the assist the commissioners with tax abatement hearings. Noting that this subject was discussed at the January Commission meeting, he asked about the progress of this project. He asked if the commissioners had to adopt a policy in order to create a Board of Assessment Review.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that he had provided the Board of Assessment Rules and Regulations concerning the establishment of such a board at the January meeting. No official vote on the subject was taken at that time. The direction from the Commission was to ascertain if there was any interest or recommendations from the towns and then proceed to find volunteers to serve on a board, if one should be established. Mr. Hart reported working on this project to that extent and has spoken with a number of people who might be willing to serve on a board. He suggested having a board of seven (7) members comprised of five (5) permanent members and two (2) alternates. The board members should come with varied backgrounds and experience in related fields. Mr. Hart recommended having a retired attorney and a retired appraiser as members to avoid any conflicts of interest. The commissioners were asked to suggest possible members.

The subject was discussed at a recent meeting with municipal officials who were receptive to the idea. Some towns have their own Board of Assessment to hear tax abatement requests. If the county establishes a Board of Assessment Review, some towns may decide to disband their board and have the county conduct the review. The hardest part of the project will be finding volunteers. Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center expressed appreciation for the county administrator's work to date on this project.

County Administrator Andrew Hart suggested that this item be put on the July 13th regular meeting agenda to decide on whether or not to adopt the Board of Assessment Rules and Regulations and formally establish a Board of Assessment Review. He expects to have a list of volunteers to present to the commissioners for approval.

3. Audit Report

Auditor James Wadman is scheduled to meet with the commissioners at their July 13th regular meeting to review the 2009 county audit. Copies of the audit are available. It appears that there is nothing in the report that would be of concern.

4. Interlocal Agreement

The Interlocal Agreement creates a "Public Safety Cooperative" with the Town of Camden, the Town of Rockport, the Town of Thomaston, the City of Rockland and Knox County, which includes the Jail, the Sheriff's office, the District Attorney's office, and the Communications Center as members. The purpose of the Public Safety Cooperative is to create an electronic database of public safety information to be used by member agencies in Knox County, in order to promote efficiency by providing consolidated computerized access to commonly shared public safety information, which will in turn provide more effective and efficient provisioning of public safety and law enforcement services to the communities of Knox County.

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that Rockland's City Council signed the interlocal agreement. Camden, Rockport and Thomaston have town meetings scheduled with interlocal agreement on their warrants. The interlocal agreement is supported by the municipal officials and it is expected that the agreement will be signed by all members.

Rockland Police Chief Boucher contacted the county administrator to report that there were some changes to the METRO system. It is expected that the initial meeting of the Board of Directors will be scheduled to be held in July. Regular meetings are expected to be held at least once every three (3) months.

5. Drug Dog

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that he had met with Patrol Administrator Tim Carroll and Attorney Peter Marchesi, Esq. regarding the trained narcotics dog proposed by the sheriff's office. An agreement is being drafted by legal counsel. The issue will be discussed further at the July 13, 2010 Commission meeting. Mr. Hart reported working another project involving the Marine Patrol, the islands, and the Sheriff's office. More information will be forthcoming regarding this project.

6. Economic Development Districts

County Administrator Andrew Hart reported that he attended a redistricting meeting concerning the realigning of Maine's Economic Development Districts (EDDs) yesterday. A handout on the presentation was provided to the commissioners. The current districts in Maine are Northern Maine, Eastern Maine, Kennebec Valley, Androscoggin Valley, Southern Maine, and Midcoast. The realignment plan consists of having Knox County be a member of the Midcoast Economic Development District (MCEDD). Waldo County would be divided with Seaside staying with Eastern Maine Development Corporation (EMDC) and Belfast, Lincolnville, Northport, and Islesboro realigning with MCEDD.

The county administrator was asked why Waldo County was being divided up. Mr. Hart explained that the coastal towns would be better served by being included in the Midcoast District, while Seaside was closer to EMDC. The realignment plan was not considered to be a "done deal". The towns that wanted to continue to work with Knox-Waldo Regional Economic Development Council (KWRED) still could. The counties/municipalities need to be affiliated with one of the economic development districts in order to receive federal funding through the Economic Development Administration (EDA).

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked how this plan would work if the towns of Waldo County are divided and aligned with different EDDs. The understanding from one of the commission meetings was that the county had to pay the membership fee in order to be eligible for federal monies. The explanation was that the relationship between the local area and the economic district was with the county and not the individual towns. The question was asked as to whether the make-up of some districts would change to include towns as well as counties. Mr. Hart explained that this issue was still being discussed. Currently Knox County is paying the membership fee. It was noted that Lincoln County appears to be paying a member as well as the Towns of Brunswick and Harpswell. Lincoln County may have to figure out a funding formula for the Midcoast District. This issue may affect the realignment plan. It appears to be a positive approach.

Commissioner Roger Moody commented that Waldo County had a history of not supporting EMDC. Waldo County is split along economic lines as far as the industrial portions looking to EMDC for assistance and other areas looking towards a coastal affiliation. The process of realigning the districts is moving forward.

VII. Adjourn

Commissioner Anne Beebe-Center asked for a motion to adjourn.

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance W. Johanson
Executive Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on July 13, 2010.

Anne H. Beebe-Center, Chair – Commissioner District #1

Richard L. Parent, Jr. – Commissioner District #2

Roger A. Moody – Commissioner District #3