

***Sagadahoc County Commissioners***  
***Meeting Minutes***  
***Tuesday, April 11, 2017***

A regular meeting of the Sagadahoc County Commissioners was held at 3:00 pm Tuesday, April 11, 2017, in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the County Courthouse, 752 High Street, Bath, Maine 04530.

Present: Chair Carol Grose; Vice-chair Charles Crosby III; Commissioner Max Dawson; County Administrator Pamela Hile; Chief Deputy Brett Strout; HR Director, Sharon Hinckley; District Attorney Geoffrey Rushlau; Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Liberman; Asst. to Administrator, Mary Kay Blatz  
Guest(s): Malcolm Ulmer, Meritain Health

- I. Chair Grose called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. and established the presence of a quorum.
- II. There were no public comments.
- III. Consent Agenda:
  1. Approval of Minutes for March 14, March 17 and March 28, 2017
  2. March Financial Statements
  3. Departmental Reports (Written)
  4. Upcoming Meeting(s):
    - a.) Regular Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, Tuesday, May 9, 2017
    - b.) Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 23, 2017 IF NEEDED
    - c.) Joint Public Hearing with BAC @ 6:00 p.m. on TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2017

Upon <b>motion</b> by Chair Grose and second by Commissioner Dawson, the <b>consent agenda was unanimously approved as presented.</b>
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IV. Department Reports

1. Update on Self-Funded Health Insurance Program – Malcolm Ulmer

Mr. Ulmer reported that the County is doing well, now in year two of the self-funded plan. Mr. Ulmer also reported that the claims paid lag is very timely at 1.06 months from date of service – which is faster than most. In the current year 96% of claims were paid to in-network providers, generating additional savings and keeping rates low. From April 2015 (the onset of the self-insured plan), increase with the Maine Municipal Employee Health Trust were as follows: 2016 County at 3% vs. MMEHT at 6.25%, 2017, County at 4.5% vs. MMEHT at 9.25%. This has resulted in a significant savings to both the employees and the County. Over time the goal is to see even greater pricing stability by being self-funded.

Mr. Ulmer advised that the plan was initially set up so that every office visit would have a copay attached to it. Over time it has been identified that through MMEHT, visits to a physician's office solely for lab work did not have a copay; therefore, Mr.

Ulmer has worked with Meritain to amend the plan to reflect that provision. He also recommended that employees who have paid these copays over the past two years be refunded their payments, as they would not have been charged on the MMEHT plan.

Upon **motion** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice-Chair Crosby, the **Commissioners unanimously authorized refunding payments to employees who have made copays for office visits which were strictly for lab work.**

2. District Attorney Department Report – Geoff Rushlau

District Attorney Rushlau reported that the previous evening a caucus was held in Wiscasset to select two names to submit to the Governor for the position of District Attorney: Deputy District Attorney Jonathan Liberman of West Bath and Paul Cavanaugh of Woolwich. The next steps for DA Rushlau are a hearing on April 25<sup>th</sup> of the Judiciary Committee for approval to his position on the District Court; then to the full Senate; and to the Governor for approval, after which the Governor will appoint a District Attorney for this district, most likely by very early May. In addition to these changes, ADA Alex Willette may be leaving the office, and DDA Liberman is working to ensure a smooth transition.

3. Sheriff's Office/Jail Update – Chief Deputy Strout

Chief Deputy Strout reported that the previous Friday, Deputy Thibeault was involved in a minor accident in Richmond when an individual pulled out and hit his cruiser broadside, to the rear. Deputy Thibeault was faultless in this accident and there was minor damage to the cruiser and no injury to the Deputy. This, along with the previous vehicle accident, leaves the department with the challenge of having vehicles available to all Deputies over the short-term.

V. Business Items

1. Consideration of Health Insurance Reimbursement for Emergency Room Charges – Malcolm Ulmer/Pam Hile (Taken out of order)

Mr. Ulmer advised that there was a concern regarding payment to some emergency room providers, due to Mid Coast Hospital contracting with Bluewater Emergency Partners, who did not participate in Aetna's network. This resulted in claims that were paid as out-of-network services. Meritain has worked with Bluewater Emergency Partners to become in-network providers, but there is \$2968.00 in payment that fell upon our employees. Since this was previously covered by MMEHT, the Administrator respectfully asked, and Mr. Ulmer made the recommendation that the Commissioners consider allowing that amount to be refunded to our employees.

Commissioner Dawson questioned if the use of emergency rooms for non-emergency services is higher than normal rate. Mr. Ulmer noted that the overall claims experience is relatively good, that many people use the walk-in emergency clinic in Brunswick, and it has not shown to be an issue to this point.

Administrator Hile made note that this summer she will work to assess the value of going to a County funded HRA with a higher deductible in effort to save additional money.

Upon **motion** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice-chair Crosby, the **Commissioners unanimously authorized refunding the difference in payment for Bluewater Emergency claims from out-of-network rates to in-network rates, to those employees who have previously paid the higher rates.**

2. Request to Begin Bid Process on New Vehicle – Chief Deputy Brett Strout

Administrator Hile requested authorization to begin the bid process for one new department cruiser. Funds have been appropriated for this purpose in the FY 2016-17 budget. In addition, payment has been received from the Risk Pool for cruiser that was destroyed in a recent accident. There is approximately \$39,000 in the account, along with the insurance reimbursement.

Upon **motion** by Commissioner Dawson second by Chair Grose, the **Commissioners unanimously authorized the Sheriff to begin the bid process on a new cruiser.**

3. Update on Budget Process

Administrator Hile advised that the BAC met this past Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> and was presented with a general overview prior to reviewing capital items and answering specific questions. The Committee was very pleased with the budget, had no changes to suggest, and unanimously recommended the budget as presented. They did not feel that any further meetings were necessary.

The group then discussed a request to fund a brown tail moth study, noting that it really is a problem that should be addressed by the state. They did not recommend including any funding in the budget, although they did not object to a small amount being appropriated from the Commissioners' contingency account should the remaining funds be pledged from other sources.

A joint public hearing of the BAC and Commissioners will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 25, 2017 in the Jury Room for the purpose of receiving comments on the proposed budget.

4. County Administrator's Report – Available for review upon request

VI. Commissioners' Comments/Announcements

Vice-chair Crosby asked that Communications Director Hinckley request a written report of what the Topsham Fire Department is looking for, from the County, regarding recording technology.

Vice-chair Crosby also noted that Bowdoin is hoping that the County can help subsidize research for the *Connect ME* program, but noted that as study does not benefit all County residents, it is not likely that the County would participate in funding this program.

Commissioner Dawson advised that he had attended the Republican Caucus to select nominations for the DA's position. He noted that Paul Cavanaugh has been a career prosecutor in Kennebec County, and that Sagadahoc County would be well served by either Mr. Cavanaugh or Jonathan Liberman.

VII. Executive Session(s)

None requested.

VIII. Adjournment

Upon **motion** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice-chair Crosby, the Board voted by **unanimous acclamation to adjourn the meeting at 4:04 p.m.**

Respectfully Submitted,

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Mary Kay Blatz, Assistant to the Administrator