

***Sagadahoc County Commissioners
Meeting Minutes***

December 8, 2015

A regular meeting of the Sagadahoc County Commissioners was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the County Courthouse, 752 High Street, Bath, Maine 04530.

Present: County of Sagadahoc Commissioners: Mr. Charles Crosby III, Chair, Ms. Carol Grose, Vice Chair, Mr. Max Dawson; Pamela Hile, County Administrator; Joel Merry, Sheriff; Lt. Deputy Scott Stewart, S.O.; Brodie Hinckley, Communications Director; Eric Sawyer, EMA Director; Mary Kay Blatz, Assistant to County Administrator

I. Chair Crosby called the meeting to order and established the presence of a quorum at 3:24 p.m.

II. FY 2014-15 Auditor's Report – Kathy Tyson, RKO

Ms. Tyson reports that the opinion on the 2015 audit was “unmodified” and that it was the smoothest Sagadahoc County audit that she has participated in so far, and she has overseen the County audit for 8+ years. The auditors' report is available for review upon request.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Adjacent property owner Rob Schultz recently requested the Board's permission to remove several trees located along his joint property line with the County. Since the denial of his original proposal, Mr. Schultz has since prepared a revised plan. This proposal includes a reduction in the number of trees to be removed towards the front of the property, as well as an alternative planting hedge to run along the side boundary. Discussion included: leaving 3 best trees and replacing the removed trees with a hedge, to measure a minimum of 70'x10'x10' in maturity; types of hedge (to be determined); time frame; long term maintenance (Mr. Schultz will assume responsibility as long as he owns the property and maintenance will revert to County if the property is sold); contractor liability; legal concerns (the Administrator will research this matter); burden of costs, which will all be assumed by Mr. Shultz; and removal of trees/wood from the property, which will be disposed of as Mr. Shultz sees fit.

Upon MOTION by Vice Chair Grose and second by Commissioner Dawson, the Commissioners moved to revisit this issue at a special meeting, after additional information is obtained. The time and date of the special meeting will be confirmed.
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IV. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Approval of Minutes for November 13, 2015
2. Approval of Warrants
3. November Financial Statements
4. Departmental Reports (Written)
5. Upcoming Meeting(s):
 - a.) Regular Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on January 12, 2015
 - b.) Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 29, 2015 IF NEEDED

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the consent agenda was unanimously approved as presented.**

V. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Joel Merry

The Sheriff reported that the past month has been quiet. One notable exception is that the County has seen its second fatality of the year in the Town of Bowdoin. The accident was speed related.

2. TBRJ – Joel Merry/Pam Hile

The jail population stands at 108, with Sagadahoc County accounting for 31 individuals, Waldo County 35 and Lincoln County 34. The remainders are Federal, Knox County and Washington County inmates. The situation with the County jail legislation, operations and funding remains as nebulous, unsettled and divisive as ever. Only \$12.2 of \$14.6 million needed was appropriated by the legislature. Lifting the cap would allow TBRJ to negotiate with other counties, making operations more viable. The Sheriff noted that it was better to address all of this in the current legislature rather than wait, as a new legislature will need to be educated as to the issues, leading to additional delays.

Proposals, events, topics of discussion, etc. that are currently in play include:

- a.) York/Cumberland Proposal for a Five County/Four Jail Single Jail Authority Entity – York and Cumberland are spearheading this proposal which would create a “super” authority composed of York, Cumberland, Somerset and Two Bridges Regional Jails. This plan would place a set price on fees that may be detrimental to smaller counties, and will need to go through the legislative process.
- b.) MCCA/MSA Options – MCCA has determined that it will not request any remeditative legislation in the upcoming session, but rather focus on obtaining \$2.4 million in supplemental funding that was cut in the last incarnation of the bill. While MSA concurs that this funding is needed, they also believe that legislative fix is needed to maintain future jail operations.
- c.) Knox County – The Knox County Administrator advises that the Knox facility inspection was completed on October 8th; however, it may take another couple of months to get the written report. Knox is still very interested in pursuing a relationship with Two Bridges, but they need this information before moving forward to determine the extent to which a partnership is viable.

VI. BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Authorization to Hire Patrol Deputy – Joel Merry

Sheriff Merry has respectfully requested the Commissioners’ authorization to hire a patrol deputy. The applicant that has been selected is fully trained and certified, which carries with it a financial restitution obligation of approximately \$18,000 to another locality.

Recommendations concerning the exact account(s) from which this should be appropriated will be forthcoming at next month’s meeting; however, it was noted that the Commissioners’ approval to hire the patrol deputy also constitutes approval of the associated cost. Sheriff Merry also pointed out that hiring an individual at this stage in his career means that the deputy will be a fully effective officer, which more than offsets any associated costs.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Commissioners unanimously approved the hiring of a Patrol Deputy.**

2. Authorization to Purchase Cruisers – Joel Merry

The FY 2015-16 budget includes \$46,975 for the purchase of two (2) new vehicles for the Sherriff's Department. When combined with the \$5,483 carry forward from the FY 2014-15 budget, a total of \$52,458 has been appropriated for this acquisition. At the time the budget was prepared, it was anticipated that approximately \$60,000 would be available for this purchase; however, rising costs associated with purchasing and placing last year's vehicles on the road reduced the carry-forward amount by about \$7,500.

Sheriff Merry presented the recent bids for the purchase of two vehicles, the estimated costs to put them on the road (cameras, striping, etc.) and the total cost for this project, including an anticipated shortfall in the available capital reserve funds. Options to make up any shortfall in the capital reserve fund include: 1.) utilizing available funds in the operating budget (if, at the end of the fiscal year, there are not adequate funds available in the operating budget to cover this cost, we would request that the balance be appropriated from the Commissioners' contingency fund); or 2.) allocating, appropriating and transferring money from the unassigned fund balance into the Sheriff's Vehicle Capital Reserve Fund.

The vehicles to be replaced average 125,000 miles and five years in age. The replacement vehicle preference is a Ford Interceptor SUV, which was recommended by the Budget Advisory Committee based on Topsham's experience. It has better gas mileage than the Charger, AWD, more interior room and is chase-rated. The deputies receiving the new vehicles would be the new-hire and Brian Carlton, both of which are accident reconstructionists and thus carry additional equipment. Assigning the vehicles to these individuals also aligns with Sheriff Merry's and Chief Deputy Strout's commitments to assigning a deputy to the life of a vehicle.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Commissioners unanimously approved the purchase of two new cruisers, with the excess funds to be transferred from the unassigned fund balance into the S.O. Vehicle Capital Reserve account.**

3. Appoint MCCA and Risk Pool Representative and Proxy for 2016

The MCCA by-laws require that Counties provide notice of their nominees to the Board of Directors at least two weeks before the annual meeting in January.

Upon **MOTION** by Chair Crosby and second by Commissioner Dawson, **the Commissioners unanimously approved the appointment of Chair Crosby to serve as the representative and Administrator Hile to serve as alternate/proxy to MCCA and to the Risk Pool Board of Directors for the 2016 calendar year.**

4. Appointment of Members to the Board of Assessing Review

The Administrator reported that the terms of David King and Fred Kahrl on the Sagadahoc County Board of Assessing Review will expire on December 31st. It is the wish of the Commissioners, and both individuals have agreed to accept reappointment for a three year term.

Upon **MOTION** by Vice Chair Grose and second by Commissioner Dawson, **the Commissioners unanimously approved the re-appointment of David King and Fred Kahrl to the Sagadahoc County Board of Assessing Review for a three year term commencing January 1, 2016.**

5. Request for Early Closing on December 24th

The Administrator noted that last year, and in some years in the past, the Commissioners have taken action to authorize the County Offices to close early on December 24th. In light of this precedence, and in an effort to extend a holiday gesture of appreciation to the staff, it is very respectfully requested that the Commissioners consider the possibility of allowing a 1 p.m. closing on December 24th. (Courts are closing at noon.)

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Commissioners unanimously approved closing County Offices at 1 P.M. on December 24th.**

6. Spillman Fire Module/Bath Fire Department Update

Commissioner Dawson was recently approached by members of the Bath Fire Department concerning a number of issues related to services provided by the Communications Department. He requested that Chief Renaud forwarded a list of items, which was subsequently reviewed by Commissioner Dawson and County staff. Staff noted that they have attempted to respond to those concerns of which they were aware; however, the lack of a single contact at the Bath FD was frustrating. After discussion, it was determined that the County would prepare a survey soliciting input from all County Departments.

7. County Administrator's Report - Available for review upon request.

8. Other

- a.) Commissioner Dawson noted on a recent warrant that the County was paying mileage when perhaps the employee(s) could use the County van if it is available.
- b.) Chair Crosby advised that the Topsham Town Manager recently made him aware that there was an issue with the manner in which we record our deeds that is not compatible with their system. Administrator Hile and Registrar Moore will meet with Topsham's assessor to see how this can be best managed.

VII. COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Commissioners requested that Administrator Hile draft a letter of congratulations to members of the Accounting Department for their stellar audit results.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION(S)

None Requested.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board voted by unanimous acclamation to adjourn at 4:46 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

May Kay Blatz, Assistant to the Administrator