

STATE OF MAINE
COUNTY OF WALDO
COURT OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

District

1 Vacant
2 Kevin J. Kelley (207) 306-9225
3 Timothy A. Parker (207) 306-9232

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Treasurer
Owen R. Smith

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
JANUARY 22, 2026
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Kevin Kelley and Timothy Parker. Staff present were Treasurer Owen Smith via Zoom, Facilities Manager Chris Bryant by Zoom, Register of Probate Sharon Peavey, Register of Deeds Stacy Grant, Correctional Administrator Matthew Magnusson, Finance Director Kari Hunt, IT Director J-sun Bailey, Office Associate Danielle Murray and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau. Also present by Zoom was Courtney Meade.

1. Welcome / Call to Order: Commissioner Kelley called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

2. Review / Revise Agenda

****MOTION: K. Kelley T. parker to add OPIOID update after Public Comment, add Auditor for 2022 Calendar Audit after OPIOID report. Unanimous**

3. Consent Agenda

- a) Finance Report
 - b) Minutes: December 23, 2025, January 5, 2026, January 8, 2026
 - c) VOTE: Consideration of action to approve the consent agenda
- The County Clerk asked for January 8, 2026 to be removed as they were not finished.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/T. Parker to remove the January 8, 2026 minutes from the Consent Agenda and to approve the rest of the consent agenda. Unanimous.**

4. Public Comment

Eric Buch given the level of interest in the budget, he felt that any case made to the budget committee about a revision should be communicated to the public. He said he wanted the draft minutes given to the Public. K. Kelley noted there was a lot of comments and it will require a lot of editing said that the revised budget has been sent to a "select" recipient list and thought it should be on the county website. When asked about the list, B. Arseneau stated that it goes to all town offices, the current Budget Committee, and others who have requested to be on this list. J. Bailey advised the revised budget was uploaded to the website on Friday 1/16/26. E. Buch also inquired about the following:

- Narrative to the Budget Committee answering 22 questions. K. Kelley said that those questions and answers will also be posted when finished.
- Agenda for January 27, 2026, which he thought was pretty slim. He wants to know the information the Commissioners have been communicating to the Budget Committee and says that it should be public. K. Kelley agreed.
- Minutes of December 12, 2025 Public Hearing: He requested that the draft minutes to be made available to the public and the 2.5 hours of comments from December 12 Public Hearing. K. Kelley advised it will be good when the County has the new website as the minutes take a lot of editing. B. Arseneau advised that those minutes are 2/3 done.
- Question on the 2022 audit and when it will be available. K. Kelley said that this will be addressed later in the court session today.

- Question about the impact of pulling the 27th pay period and paying the two IT software bills from the 2025 budget. He thought that the Finance Department can run a report that can be, not exact, but can show if the budget is ahead or behind.

T. Parker – noted that there is a storm forecast for early next week and that a notice should be sent out about possible remote work and the possibility of needing to reschedule the next budget meeting.

5. Opioid Report

Matt Magnusson presented an update. Last time they were in the process of dissolving the Standing Committee. He presented a rough draft of the minutes to the Commissioners, which will be reviewed and accepted by the OPIOID Committee on January 26th. Key categories to be addressed.

Review of the Four Pillars -- Substance Abuse Treatment, Harm Reduction, Recovery, and Substance Use Prevention.

Review of Waldo County Profile - Reviewed the Waldo County Profile developed by MOSS to support data-informed decision-making.

Working List of Identified Needs

The committee discussed and identified the following priority needs within Waldo County:

Housing

Housing was identified as a significant challenge for many individuals. While the committee agreed housing is a priority, there was recognition that fully addressing housing needs may exceed the capacity of available Settlement Funds.

Transportation

Transportation was identified as a major barrier, particularly for residents in rural areas. Many services are in the Belfast area, limiting access for those without reliable transportation.

Treatment and Recovery Infrastructure

There is a lack of residential treatment services, recovery centers, and sober living options within Waldo County. The committee discussed the loss of funding for Project Connect and the anticipated negative impact this will have on service availability.

Community Engagement

The committee discussed the need for stronger community engagement, including partnerships with businesses, churches, and other community groups, and explored how the committee can foster increased involvement.

Prevention Services for Youth

There is a notable lack of substance use prevention and reduction services and training for youth. When viewed through the Four Pillars framework, prevention was identified as a significant gap.

Reentry and Wraparound Care

The committee identified a lack of wraparound services for individuals released from jail. Many return to prior living situations without adequate housing, transportation, or access to services.

Geographic Equity of Services

The importance of distributing services and Settlement Funds across multiple locations within Waldo County was emphasized.

Next Steps

The committee discussed the development of:

- A grant application
- Grant application process
- A scoring rubric based on the priority needs identified during this meeting

These tools will guide funding decisions moving forward.

They hope to have a grant application ready to be sent out in 60 days and are also developing a scoring rubric to best identify the areas that need the most help. Once applications have been created it will be on the County website. Each application will be put through the rubric and numeric score. They will then meet with the applicants and find out how they intend to use the money, and how they will measure areas of success with the funds. Then will bring the full list of applications and the committee's recommendations for how the funds are to be used. There have been some comments that the County has been sitting on a large amount of funds for a long time. Since starting with MOSS, they are going step by step and are moving in the right direction. They are working the process and trying not to skip or rush through anything and have full confidence that they are doing the best job possible.

T. Parker said wheels of government should move slow to be accurate. He said he'd asked a long time ago and was asking again – can some of these funds be used to create housing for those transitioning from drug addiction?

M. Magnusson said that he realized that the housing issue is extremely costly. These funds will not cover everything, but the Committee would like to address the housing and transitioning.

K. Kelley said that from past history, it's good to have a case manager for housing alone – it's a full-time job. There is a bill making way through State House to take 1% from the County Directly for housing. He would like to know how the State is funding the other 90% of the housing. In speaking with a carpenter, it is \$300 to \$325 per square foot. WCAP has to configure transportation vehicles for both handicapped people, those going for other medical treatment, and those going for addiction treatment. Some places create a building as a permanent living center and then have no funds. Temporary transitional housing is usually more sustainable. He is looking for successes and for the money to be well spent and well documented where it's used. K. Kelley would like to request \$100,000.00 for those who are residents at Somerset who are receiving subcutaneous treatment there.

M. Magnusson said sometimes the best use of funds can be for already existing organizations that are already helping. It's been found that the funds go further that way when what's working is identified and made more scalable.

K. Kelley said he would like whoever receives funds to come and report once a month with data so the Commissioners know the effectiveness.

The next Opioid meeting will be 1/26/26.

6. Audit

The 2022 AUDIT was presented by Kevin Edwards from RHR Smith. It was an unmodified opinion, which was the highest that could be given. The Management Concerns letter dealt with reconciliations done and signed by the end of month (30 days), and General Ledger reconciled and signed also by 30 days, and posting receivable and payables at end of year. There were no material issues, and no findings.

K. Kelley refereed to Page 8 of the audit that a Mid-Coast Villager Reporter reported that \$3,953,927.10 is a 3.6% increase. He spoke about the County's self-insured health plan. The State is smart about generics, and the County is 99.2% with generics.

Page 9 Revenues section.

Auditor Kevin Edwards referred to Operating Grants and Contributions at \$3,257.729.

K. Kelley asked about Employee benefits and K. Edwards answered that it increased greatly because of where it was in the revenue section.

Pg 10 - Table 3 General fund unassigned was just an increase.

Pg 12 – Economic Factors: In 2025 the TAN was not borrowed from until April.

Pg. 18 – Information Technology: \$83,319.00 was the salary. Now they are seeing software and all other IT related costs as it's the first year there was a budget for IT.

Pg. 27 – The County buildings are 20-50 years old. T. Parker said Facilities is doing a good job.

The Commissioners were asked why on the Benefit Pension Plan it says 311 are in the plan, and it was noted that the County doesn't have the many employees. Kevin Edwards (RHR) said he would investigate that.

Pg. 39 - Merit raises – K. Kelley stated that the County doesn't give 11.48%

Pg. 48 Risk Pool didn't have deductibles, but he knows for a fact that's changed.

Management Letter. Overall, not a bad year for auditing. No Material Findings.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to accept the 2022 Audit. Unanimous.**

2023 Audit: K. Kelley said it will be a difficult year and asked for a timeline. K. Edwards said it would be roughly 2 months. K. Kelley thought it could be roughly March 19th for a draft version of the audit.

The Commissioners tabled 2023 Audit review to March 19, 2026.

7. Department Reports/Requests

7.1 Finance – Finance Director Kari Hunt

a) OPIOID Funds: K. Hunt said she had corrected the balance and there no approved expenses, no deposits, and no interest since December 31, 2026.

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve expenditures in the OPIOID account at Zero. Unanimous.**

b) Financial Software Contracts – Positive Pay Connector with Edmonds: This sends warrant-approved pre-pays and checks, sends to the bank, and adds a level of fraud protection and if there's a check that is not on the check approval list, it will bounce back to Finance for review. This module wasn't in the first quote, and usually costs \$1,650.00 and after explaining the current budget situation, the rep came back and offered it at no additional cost for 3 yrs.

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve the Positive Connector. Discussion of how the system works. Unanimous.**

c) Finance Invoice Schedule.

K. Hunt presented the 2026 Finance Invoice Schedule and asked department heads to have invoices submitted the Thursday prior to Commissioners Court Session.

****MOTION T. Parker/K. Kelley to accept the 2026 Invoice Schedule. Unanimous.**

d) NDS Data will need to retain 2024 and 2025 information for the audits. This contract has been signed and sent out and the amount was \$2,262.00. The data has already been retrieved.

****MOTION: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve the purchase agreement of 1/15/2026 for \$2,262.00 to from Norther Data Systems for data retrieval, to be out of 2026 budget. Discussion: K. Kelley asked if it would be**

coming out of the 2025 budget and K. Hunt said the County is 2026 but on the 2025 budget limit.

Unanimous.

- e) Auditor's letter was reviewed.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/T. Parker to approve and send the standard letter required from the Commissioners to RHR Smith, Auditor, for the FY 2022 Audit. Unanimous.**

K. Kelley asked if auditor was paid in full, and K. Hunt stated the auditor had been paid for 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 for approximately \$70,000.00.

- f) K. Hunt apologized in advance and advised she paid an invoice prior to approval as it was emailed to a department head on January 6, came to Finance on January 14, was due January 16, and it was Wolf Com. J. Trundy said it was all the body camera coverage history and would have been 2% of \$1,343.00. T. Parker said he can't condemn her and thanked her for helping to avoid additional taxes.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to approve \$1,343.00 invoice payment to Wolf Com as stated. Unanimous.**

- g) 2026 Budget Tax Cap: After extensive research and legal representation, the 2026 Tax Cap is 18.33%. T. Parker asked if this included contracts for this year. K. Hunt said that this is based on the previous year and the year prior to that, and the growth. She will figure out the Town's percentages, add to the County's and that is the total.

K. Kelley said 3 items have been pulled back to the 2025 budget: Edmonds at \$29,000; CivicPlus website \$51,000, and an invoice prepaid for technology \$7,800.00. She also prepaid Housing for the Reentry residents at \$325,000.00 and brought the 27th pay period from 2026 to 2025, with roughly \$239,000.00 savings. Another question was how the bottom line of the budget was affected. The County has expended 95% of entire budget. The Jail side has expended 93% of overall budget. This include \$650,000.00 from the TAN that was used to cover the weekly claims cost. E. Buch asked where this might take it. \$666,000.00 was used for health costs and down to about \$15,000.00 and in the ballpark for being relatively balanced at the end of the year.

- h) MCRCC (Jail) Warrant 01/22/2026:

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve the 01/22/2026 MCRCC (Jail) Warrant in the amount of \$52,074.97 and the 1/12/2026 payroll in the amount of \$51,256.66 for a total of \$103,331.63. Unanimous.**

- i) County Warrant 01/22/26:

****Motion: T. Parker /K. Kelley to approve the 01/22/2026 County Warrant in the amount of \$231,704.11 and the 1/12/2026 payroll in the amount of \$201,520.79 for a total of \$433,224.90. Unanimous.**

8) Sheriff's Report

Asset Forfeiture will be received in the amount of \$2,604.21 along with a Mossberg MC1 SC 9MM Handgun. T. Parker asked if J. Trundy had a recommendation for where money should be put. T. Trundy said historically it is put in an asset forfeiture for later use, but if it was his idea he would use it to reduce the 2026 budget.

MOTION **T. Parker/K. Kelley is applied to the 2026 budget. Unanimous.

9) Waldo County Emergency Management Agency Report

EMA Director Dale Roley applied for a Federal Grant – Appendix B, page 4. Some states accepted and already have the money. Maine has not because State has said no. Some states sued. Oregon went to court and said it could be done. D. Rowley feels they will appeal. The State of Maine says if ICE language is removed, it will sign it. It reimburses part of the EMA budget and because the grant funds haven't increased but cost have, it is no longer covering 50% but closer to 25%. If signed, the County can get up to \$67,000.00 and wouldn't spend

anything they haven't spent already. T. Parker asked if it was signed, whether the County lose any state funding. D. Rowley explained that if the Federal Government says the State is not compliant, the funds won't be awarded. D. Rowley said the County can wait, and normally would be submitting invoices but can't submit for October, November, December, and likely January because it was tied up in court. If the County doesn't sign, it won't get the money and if the County waits, it might get less than the \$67,000.00. T. Parker said he was OK with pushing this off and he and K. Kelley would likely need to discuss. K. Kelley said he knew what other counties have done, and he agreed with the federal government as it was concerned about freedom of hunger, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and fear, and noted that all but freedom of religion have already been lost. With these kind of mandates, once you've signed an agreement, you're locked in. The language is getting stronger, more targeted. D. Rowley said he could come back at another meeting if the Commissioners needed to consider it more. The Commissioners tabled further discussion to March 19, 2026.

10) County Clerk Report

a) B. Arseneau asked if someone should be monitoring B. Johnson email.

****MOTION K. Kelley/T. Parker to have the county clerk monitor B. Johnson email. Unanimous.**

b) It was noted that a news article in the Midcoast Villager was calling the next Budget Committee Meeting a Public Hearing, which was inaccurate and misleading. The Budget Committee Chair has reached out to the news reporter to get that clarified.

c) A Notice of Layout and Taking in Prospect was reported to the Commissioners.

11) Commissioners Old Business

a) Commissioner Johnson had been the point of contact for a wage study being conducted by Sagadahoc County. This task was transferred to Human Resources Director T. Benton.

****MOTION K. Kelley/T. Parker for Human Resources T. Benton to take over being point of contact for the wage study. Unanimous.**

12) Commissioners New Business

Commissioner Liaison Duties

****MOTION K. Kelley/T. Parker to remove Liaison duties, have all departments report to commissioners and if there is an urgent matter, contact the chairman.**

a) K. Kelley stated there are 29 Active reserve accounts with a total balance of \$1,835,160.06. There is a total of 93.69 Full Time Employees, 2.69 Part Time Employees and 30-ish Non-union employees. T. Parker these numbers do not include any contract workers.

b) In the new budget there are 93.69 FTE, 61 are union, 7 elected, and the balance are key staff, 30-ish non-union.

13) Human Resources Report – Human Resources Director Tracy Benton

Because of the budget process all salaries are at 2025 levels. No employee has received any pay increases. Every employee has been affected.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/T. Parker promoted 1/11 \$40.56. Unanimous.**

a) Pay Step Increases to be Noted

- District Attorney's Office Legal Assistant Amber Reynolds has completed 5 years of employment effective January 25, 2026 and will receive a pay increase to \$26.33 per hour. So noted.

b) Deputy Jacob Peirce has been promoted to Detective effective January 11, 2026 with a new pay rate of \$40.56. Since he has been employed 3 years, it saves on training fees by hiring internally. So noted.

c) 2025 OSHA Report – There were zero reportable OSHA reports for injuries and illness in the Jail. The County

is not responsible for reporting contractor injuries.

There were two recordable injuries, but no lost time associated for the County. Together there was over 200,000 work hours with only 2 injuries and 100% recovery.

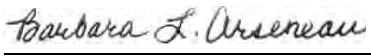
c) Miscellaneous

The previous bullying policy has been reviewed and updated and is now called the “Professionalism Policy” and was presented to the Commissioners for approval and implementation. T. Parker agreed with all but the elected officials part, because they cannot be fired.

****MOTION: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve the Professionalism Policy with the edit of removing elected officials. Unanimous.**

- c) There is a new Surveillance Notification Act being implemented under H.P.25-L.D. 61 “An Act to Regulate Employer Surveillance to Protect Workers”. It’s currently awaiting signature in the State House. This allows that public employees can be recorded. Most already know this. It was presented a draft form for review as this will need to be resigned by the employee annually.
- d) Spirit of America Ceremony – T. Parker noted that this ceremony would be coming up soon and would recommend B. Johnson. K. Kelley felt there should be a proclamation for Commissioner Johnson by February 5, 2025.

14) Adjourn: T. Parker/K. Kelley to adjourn at 11:37 a.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted by  Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau