

STATE OF MAINE
COUNTY OF WALDO
COURT OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS

District

1 Betty I. Johnson (207) 323-3767
2 Kevin J. Kelley (207) 306-9225
3 Timothy A. Parker (207) 306-9232

Barbara L. Arseneau
County Clerk



39-B Spring Street
Belfast, ME 04915

Phone (207) 338-3282
Fax (207) 338-6788
E-mail: countyclerk@waldocountyme.gov

Treasurer
Owen R. Smith

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
DECEMBER 4, 2025
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Betty Johnson (Chairman) and Kevin Kelley. T. Parker had informed the Clerk that he would be absent. Staff were IT Director J-sun Bailey and Treasurer Owen Smith both via Zoom, Finance Director Kari Hunt, Human Resources Director Tracy Benton, and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau took minutes.

1. Call to Order: Commissioner Johnson called the court session to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Review/Revise Agenda

B. Johnson requested adding to the agenda:

- 1.) Vote for the 2026 Waldo County Commissioner Chair
- 2.) Discussion of scheduling a Special Court Session for December 11, 2025 starting at 2:00 p.m. At this point she would prefer not scheduling it, and K. Kelley agreed.

K. Kelley requested removing from the agenda discussion on the five-year inmate boarding contract with Somerset County be it's not ready yet.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to add to the regular agenda, the vote for 2026 Waldo County Commissioner Chair and to remove discussion on the five-year inmate boarding contract with Somerset County. Unanimous.**

3. Consent Agenda

- a) Finance Report
- b) Minutes: September 25, 2025, October 2, 2025, October 16, 2025, November 20, 2025. B. Arseneau requested that the minutes from November 13, 2025 be removed from the Consent Agenda because they were already approved on November 20, 2025. K. Kelley requested removing the minutes from September 25, 2025, October 2, 2025, and November 11, 2025 from the Consent agenda for edits.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to remove the November 13, 2025 minutes, and to remove the minutes from September 25, 2025, October 2, 2025, and November 20, 2025 from the Consent Agenda for discussion and edits. Unanimous.**

After reviewing edits with the County Clerk, the Commissioners voted as follows:

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve the minutes from September 25, 2025 with edits. Unanimous.**

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve the minutes from November 20, 2025 with edits. Unanimous.**

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve the minutes from October 2, 2025 with edits. Unanimous.**

4. Public Comment

None.

5. Department Reports/Requests

5.1 Finance - Presented by Finance Director Kari Hunt

2026 Tax Anticipation Note Bid Proposals: The proposal request sent by K. Hunt to local banks was for the County to borrow \$5.5 million. Three banks declined to submit a proposal.

1. First National Bank submitted a proposal with an interest rate of 5.22%, with a compounded total of \$280,807.40. It is less than the 5.66% estimate provided in the summer. The previous year's interest was 5.22%. It is a fixed rate, so if the rate drops drastically, the County would have to make a request with the bank President for a decision and this is not a guarantee this would happen.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson 5.22% and compounded total of \$280,807.40. Unanimous.**

2. K. Hunt reported that the Severance Reserve has been reconciled and the current balance is \$1,730.00. She notified the Commissioners that there are sign-on bonuses due, other year-end buyouts for unused sick and comp time that may be requested, and that the total highest estimate is \$10,000.00 so there will be a shortfall for that reserve.

a) MCRCC (Jail) Warrant 12/04/2025

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve the December 4, 2025 MCRRC Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant at \$47,055.60 and the December 4, 2025 payroll of \$57,997.19 for a grand total of \$105,052.79. Unanimous.**

b) County Warrant 12/04/2025

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve the December 4, 2025 County Accounts Payable and Reserve Warrant in the amount of \$ 189,766.24 and December 4, 2025 payroll of \$226,546.25 for a grand total of \$416,312.52. Unanimous.**

c) OPIOID Fund Warrant 12/04/2025

****MOTION: B. Johnson/K. Kelley to approve \$0.00 (zero) expenditures from the OPIOID Fund. Unanimous.**

5.2 Sheriff's /Corrections Report – Presented by Chief Deputy Matthew Curtis and Correctional Administrator Matthew Magnusson.

a) Five-year Inmate Boarding Contract with Somerset County – cancelled by K. Kelley as it is not ready.

b) Pay Structure for Part-time Corrections Officers. M. Curtis reported discrepancies in the wages for part-time, per-diem Corrections Officers, who are not permanent part-time employees. He recommended aligning their pay with the structure used for part-time Patrol Officers—using the starting wage rates for non-certified and certified full-time officers. Corrections Officers complete a 6-week Academy followed by required job-shadowing/field training. Once completed, they are certified. Because these are part-time positions, they are non-union and not subject to separate COLAs. The recommended non-certified and certified wages remain within budget and reflect that these employees perform the same duties and hold the same certifications as full-time staff. M. Curtis emphasized that these per-diem employees should not be confused with permanent part-time staff. M. Magnusson added that they are typically used for unusual or emergent needs, such as extended hospital supervision of inmates.

M. Curtis noted a significant pay disparity among the three employees currently in these roles. The proposal is to implement a flat hourly rate—similar to the Patrol Division—by linking part-time per-diem wages to the starting pay for non-certified and certified Corrections Officers. This would prevent ongoing wage discrepancies. It was recommended that the Human Resources Director finalize the definitions and language for part-time classifications, and all agreed. B. Johnson requested that the term “Per Diem” be included. K. Kelley asked to further review with HR the impact of tying non-union wages to union rates and any potential contract implications.

M. Magnusson agreed to further HR discussion but noted that union negotiations established competitive

wages, and current part-time rates are not competitive. The proposed approach aligns wages with the actual work performed by both full-time and part-time staff. K. Kelley requested documentation outlining the certification process for Corrections Officers so the Commissioners can review what is required.

As a separate matter, K. Kelley reported that because 2028 is a Leap Year, this will need to be factored into the boarding contract, and the Somerset County Administrator will work with their attorney on that language.

5.3 County Clerk Report

a) Vote for Commissioner Representatives and Proxy's for Maine County Commissioners Association Board of Directors and Maine County Commissioners Association Risk Pool Board of Directors:

K. Kelley stated that on December 9, 2025, he will be asked to do a different role with this association so he will not serve regularly on the Risk Pool Board of Directors but could be a proxy.

****K. Kelley nominated Betty Johnson to serve as representative on the MCCA Board of Directors and Kevin Kelley to serve as proxy. Nominations ceased. Passed unanimously.**

****B. Johnson nominated Betty Johnson to serve as representative on the MCCA Risk Pool Board of Directors and K. Kelley to serve as proxy. Nominations ceased. Passed unanimously.**

b) Commissioners Court Schedule Change for January 2026: New Year's Day falls on the 1st Thursday of the month so B. Johnson recommended the Commissioners Court sessions be scheduled on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays starting at 10:00 a.m. for January only.

****MOTION: B. Johnson/K. Kelley to change the Commissioners Court schedule for the month of January 2026 only to be the 2nd and 4th Thursdays of that month (January 8 and January 22) and the remainder of 2026 will be the usual 1st and 3rd Thursdays of the month. Unanimous.**

c.) Application for Appeal of Board of Assessors for Abatement of Property Taxes received from Claire Hamilton, Brooks, Maine: The application was received November 13, 2025. The Commissioners will review the documents further and set a tentative hearing date within 60 days of receiving this application.

****MOTION: B. Johnson/K. Kelley to set a tentative date of January 8, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. for the Property Tax Appeal hearing for Claire Hamilton of Brooks. Discussion: K. Kelley recommended having an attorney assist with this hearing. Unanimous.** The County Clerk is to send to all parties the hearing notice.

d.) Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation Culvert Information: The Commissioners had read the information and there was no need for discussion.

e.) Proposed Wage Study Through MCOG: Sagadahoc County Administrator Amber Jones sent an email to all counties asking if there was any interest in MCOG to perform a coordinated wage study with all the Maine Counties, since MCOG had already been approached and was interested in doing this. After brief discussion, the Commissioners stated that before they responded, they need to know the following:

- Whether there is a cost for the study.
- That it would need to involve all the County Human Resources departments.
- They would need to see the templates in advance, and that the templates be approved by all Maine County Commissioners.
- B. Johnson, who serves on MCOG, would like to speak with them, and also speak with Administrator Amber Jones, so she requested that B. Arseneau forward A. Jones' email to her for contact info.

f.) Review Winter Weather/Closing Office Process:

The Commissioners and Clerk reviewed the process of notifying non-essential departments the day before inclement weather to arrange for their employees to work remotely. Delayed openings notification will be sent out by 6:00 p.m. the night before. The County will continue to use the term "non-essential employees".

IT Director J. Bailey asked if he could speak and informed the Commissioners that the County has a new automated program that, once contact information is received from each employee, can automatically notify all employees of inclement weather closings, etc. The Commissioners agreed to try that program and will continue with the current process until that is set up.

****MOTION K. Kelley/B. Johnson to use the new "Rave Alerts" software, with a date certain return information response from employees. Unanimous.**

g.) 2026 Waldo County Commissioner Chair:

****K . Kelley nominated Betty Johnson to serve as 2026 Chair. Nominations ceased. Passed unanimously.**

h.) K. Kelley stated for the record that he has been voted as Co-chair of the MCCA Legislative Committee.

5.5 Human Resources Report

a) Pay step increases to be noted:

- **Deputy EMA Director Olga Hussey will complete 20 years of employment on January 3, 2026 with a pay increase to \$28.88 per hour. So noted.**
- **EMA Director Dale Rowley will complete 20 years of employment on January 29, 2026 with a salary increase to \$82,047.00. So noted.**

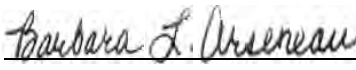
b) Miscellaneous – nothing new to report

****K. Kelley/B. Johnson to go into executive session for a personnel matter according at 11:03 a.m.**

The Commissioners resumed public session at 11:25 a.m.

****MOTION: K. Kelley/B. Johnson to approve exit interviews tentatively until a formal, policy is presented to the County Commissioners and signed. Unanimous.**

****K. Kelley/B. Johnson seconded to adjourn at 11:26 a.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by  Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau