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COUNTY OF WALDO
COURT OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Treasurer
Owen R. Smith

Waldo County Commissioners Court Session
March 5, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Kevin Kelley (Chair), Timothy Parker, Breanna Pinkham Bebb. Staff present were Human Resources Director Tracy Benton, Finance Director Kari Hunt, Treasurer Owen Smith, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau, and Office Associate Danielle Murray. Staff Present via Zoom were Register of Probate Sharon Peavey, EMA Director Dale Rowley, Facilities Director Chris Bryant, Register of Deeds Stacy Grant, Deputy Register of Deeds Amy Keller, Legal Secretary/Office Administrative Assistant Felicia Gray, Communications Director Mike Larrivee, Corrections Corporal Chris Albert, Detention Manager Randy Fox.

Welcome / Call to Order: Commissioner Kevin Kelley called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

1. Review / Revise Agenda
Commissioner Kelley requested adding two edits: 1. A moment of silence for those recently killed in action. 2. Review Public Comment Participation Policy before the Public Comment.
****Motion: B. Pinkham Bebb/T. Parker to approve changes as requested. Unanimous.**

2. Consent Agenda
a) Finance Report
b) Minutes: February 17, 2026, and February 19, 2026 Court Sessions
c) VOTE: Consideration of Action to approve consent agenda
****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve the consent agenda. Unanimous.**

3. Public Comment Policy Open for Discussion
Commissioner Kelley reviewed Items 1–10 of the public comment policy, noting key updates: sign-in is requested to maintain a public record, and each speaker is limited to 3 minutes, with the possibility of a second round at the Chair's discretion. Commissioners are not required to respond to public comments, and all remarks must be directed to the Chair. The Chair has authority to issue warnings, call a recess, and remove individuals if necessary to maintain order.

Commissioner Parker stated the policy aligns with standard practices used by select boards and school boards to ensure equal opportunity to speak, while acknowledging some flexibility may be appropriate when additional time is needed. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb noted that lengthy public comments appear to have been typical and suggested addressing concerns directly with individuals rather than creating additional rules, though she acknowledged the policy reflects standard practice. She emphasized that written comments may be submitted for the record through the county administrator under FOAA, and that community members may request agenda items for more in-depth discussion.
****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve this policy for public comment and participation.** Discussion: Commissioner Pinkham Bebb asked if this only applies to Commissioners Court not Public Hearings. K. Kelley and T. Parker said these are only for Commissioners Court not public hearing or tax abatement hearings. Commissioner Kelley stated the rules are different for tax abatement hearings. **Unanimous.**

4. Public Comment
None.

5. Department Reports/Requests -
5.1 Finance – Finance Director Kari Hunt
a) ****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to approve the 3/5/26 MCRRC (Jail) Warrant in the amount of $63,922.38 and the 2/28/26 payroll in the amount of $ 45,871.86 for a total of $109,794.24. Unanimous.**
b) **** Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve the 3/5/26 County Warrant in the amount of $179,157.16 and the 2/28/26 payroll in the amount of $184,751.73 for a total of $363,908.89. Unanimous.**

c) ****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve the 3/5/26 OPIOID Warrant at $0.00. Unanimous.**

d) IT Expenditures – Still undecided and have not been paid.

e) A new issue has arisen impacting all departments. On 2/19/26, payment of $2,833.83 for the county credit card bill was denied. The county uses a shared credit card, with a 3% or $39.00 minimum late fee, and current interest/late fees total $85.01. Because the balance was not paid in full, all cards are now shut off. This has disrupted operations, including travel and training, with two departments losing discounts. The only immediate solution is to pay the $2,833.83. An alternative—requiring department heads to obtain personal credit cards—was rejected by Commissioners Parker and Kelley as poor practice and a violation of policy. Cards will be permanently shut off if unpaid within 90 days. Finance Director K. Hunt noted a request to use personal credit cards for purchases. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb asked for a funding recommendation; Finance Director K. Hunt recommended using the General Fund, as no reserves are available

****Motion T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to pay in the amount of $2,833.83 and to be earmarked for the Budget Committee that due to the implications of not passing a budget, these are the impacts and side effects. Unanimous.**

Commissioner Parker requested this be listed on the agenda for 3/6/26 budget meeting listed as discussion of impacts of not passing a budget. Commissioner Kelley requested to add it as a note.

Commissioner Pinkham Bebb asked about the status of the IT bill. Finance Director K. Hunt said it is currently on hold until the budget passes. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb also asked whether there is any risk of Public Safety services in Waldo County being shut off. Finance Director K. Hunt reported that $189,420.91 in IT expenses remain outstanding, including a credit card bill, with the largest portion owed to Spillman. One invoice for $23,239.60 from 2019 was not paid because it was not sent until 2025. IT Director J-sun Bailey had reviewed invoices from 2019–2021 and found no record that it had been billed or paid earlier. He confirmed the work, migrating from an old the new server, was completed and it appears the vendor failed to bill the County in 2019.

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to pay the IT bill of $186,586.18 from 2019 that was never paid and pay with the reserves, and to earmark it as repercussions of not running government efficiently and effectively having consequences and be shown to the Budget Committee for tomorrow's meeting.** Discussion: Commissioner Parker said he could be flexible, that losing Spillman would be devastating and could violate safety issues and cannot be shut off. Commissioner Kelley asked for clarification of what is included in the total. It includes Blue Mantis for $30.00, $3,931.22 for the Users' Conference, $299.25, $3,285.00 is a Work Order from 2019, $23,960.00 (migrating old to new server) two Flex Service bills at $540.00 each, and Spillman is $153,551.63. The Elon credit card motion had already been made. Information Technology Exchange disposal was $450.00. The total bill is $186,587.08. **B. Pinkham Bebb made a friendly edit to amend T. Parker's motion to $186,587.08 and K. Kelley made a friendly edit to take the funds from General Fund instead of Reserves. Unanimous**.

5.2 Information Technology Report – J-Sun Bailey Finance Director

a) Miscellaneous: IT Director J-Sun Bailey requested to go into Executive Session for confidential and security information according to MRS Title 1§402(3).

****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to go into executive session for security as allowed by MRS Title 1§402(3) at 9:31 a.m. Unanimous.**

The Commissioners reconvened Public Session at 9:54 a.m.

b) CivicPlus Demonstration/Discussion:

IT Director J. Bailey demonstrated the FOAA system, explaining that requests can be received, tracked, and made publicly searchable to reduce duplication. The system includes automated email confirmations, assigned staff notifications, workflow approvals, backup assignments, and redaction capabilities before release. Commissioner Parker asked about compliance with accident reports and Communications Center requests. IT director J. Bailey confirmed the system supports compliance and demonstrated document redaction, including the ability to explain withheld information (e.g., health-related). He noted that the system will significantly improve tracking compared to current internal methods. County Clerk B. Arseneau confirmed that this will greatly assist with managing and tracking FOAA requests. IT Director J. Bailey explained that it has been tested internally with Communications Director Mike Larrivee. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb encouraged requestors to provide contact information for faster responses, though it cannot be required by law. The system also includes a hyperlink to relevant statutes. IT Director J. Bailey requested approval to launch the system and go live. The correct department is notified when a FOAA request is received.

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley for the FOAA system to go live with CivicPlus.** Discussion: Commissioner T. Parker asked if it meets DOC compliance because there are often medical bills. IT Director J. Bailey said there is a way to redact information, or the response can be that this is non-public information. **Unanimous.**

IT Director J. Bailey asked about submitting press release regarding this new FOAA system and was told that he could draft it and send to the commissioners to approve.

c) Miscellaneous – IT Director J. Bailey said he had been asked to break down pricing for Flex (new name for Spillman/Motorola). The total **county** share is $153,551.63. A detailed breakdown was provided for Belfast, Islesboro, Searsport, Stockton Springs, the Communications Center, and the Sheriff's Office (including Corrections). If separated, the county share would be $115,163.72, and the outside agencies' share would be $38,387.91.
****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb moved to present alternative payment options for Flex (formerly Spillman) to the Budget Committee for information purposes**. Discussion: Commissioners debated whether introducing alternative funding ideas would distract the Budget Committee from focusing on appropriations needed to pass the budget. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb preferred to keep the discussion limited to the budget itself. Commissioner Parker felt presenting the information would help illustrate the impact of not having an approved budget and raise broader questions about how county services such as dispatch and law enforcement support are funded across towns. Commissioner Kelley noted that many county services are used unevenly by towns, like Water & Sewer, but still need to be provided countywide. Discussion also touched on varying levels of local law enforcement in towns Islesboro, Stockton Springs, Searsport and Belfast. Commissioner Kelley made a friendly edit clarifying that the information would be presented to the Budget Committee for informational purposes only, with no expectation of action. **Unanimous.**

5.6 Human Resources Report - Tracy Benton Human Resources Director (moved up on schedule)
a) Pay Step Increases to be Noted – None. A Deputy in the Sheriff's Office has submitted their resignation. The severance due is $3,948.57, and the Severance Account is overdrawn by $55,000.00.
****Motion T. Parker/K. Kelley to pay $3,948.57 from Severance from the General Fund, earmarking that being over in Severance by $55,000.00 is a repercussion of not passing a budget and presented it to the Budget Committee tomorrow, and that it be paid from General Funds. Unanimous.**
Human Resource Director T. Benton has already reached out to employee to schedule an exit interview.

b) Executive Session: Consideration of compensation as permitted by MRS Title 1§405(6)(A)
**** Motion K. Kelley/T. Parker to go into executive session at 10:34 a.m. for consideration of compensation per** MRS **Title 1§405(6)(A).**

Returned to public session at 11:02 p.m.

****Motion K. Kelley/B. Pinkham Bebb that the Commissioners will meet as a follow-up after the next Commissioners meeting on April 2, 2026 to meet with AFSCME Union for arbitration.** Discussion: Commissioner Parker made a friendly edit to present to the Budget Committee that as a result for not passing a budget, the County is going to arbitration. He wanted it cited that at the last budget meeting, it was told to them that if the Budget got below a certain number, they were going to have to go back to the Budget Committee again for more money for professional servicers. **Unanimous.**

5.3 County Clerk Report
a) Correspondence
b) Miscellaneous: Invoices: The Commissioners' Printer is low on Toner and $499.69 for four cartridges is the least expensive that was found after researching. The Commissioners asked if there were enough funds since the budget is the same as 2025 and were told yes.
****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to utilize $499.69 for toner to come out of the 2025-based Commissioners Office Supply Line Budget and be earmarked for the Budget Committee as a consequence of not passing a budget that there is this unforeseen expense. Unanimous.**
County Clerk B. Arseneau reported there an invoice from the Maine County Commissioners Association Risk Pool Coverage for $138,100.40 separated into two pieces. The Jail amount is $50,633.67 with an option to pay in two installments. The March payment is $112,783.57 and the second payment amount of $25,316.83 is due 7/1/26.
****Motion: B. Pinkham Bebb/T. Parker to pay the invoice for Maine County Commissioners Association Risk Pool Coverage in the amount of $112,783.57.** Discussion: County Clerk B. Arseneau was asked how it was paid last year, whether it was broken out the same, or was different. Finance Director K. Hunt replied no, the amount has increased. Commissioner Parker requested the increase amount from 2025 to 2026, and was told it is a 10.3% increase of $12,984.31. He said he hoped the budget committee will pass the budget before the second payment is due. Commissioner Parker made a friendly edit to include that the first installment be earmarked in the repercussions for budget committee not passing a budget to be

presented to them tomorrow. Commissioner Kelley made a friendly edit to ensure the current number is in the budget and made a third friendly edit that it be funded from the General Fund. **Unanimous.**

County Clerk B. Arseneau stated that the Belfast police department sent an invoice for contracting an officer three times for crowd control in the amount of $1,434.60 or $478.20 per detail for 3 different dates. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb asked why a Belfast Police Officer was used instead of a County Sheriff Deputy and Commissioner Parker explained that the Police Department has ordinances, and this would be a jurisdiction issue. Commissioner Kelley recommended to hold off paying that bill for now.

5.4 Commissioners Old Business

a) 2026 Budget

Finance Director K. Hunt presented an Actual vs. Budget comparison for 2024 and 2025 and the proposed 2026 budget (Version 6), incorporating recent updates from department heads. No changes were made to EMA, District Attorney, Commissioners, Human Resources, Finance Office, Facilities, IT, or Registry of Deeds. Adjustments include a $5,000 reduction to Probate Court (now $330,000.00), a $75,000.00 increase to the Sheriff's budget (plus $21,500.00) bringing it to $2,705,525.00, and a $1,500.00 reduction to the Communications Center. Special Appropriations remain $0.00, and Audit remains $26,000.00. Prior reductions totaling $128,054.00 were confirmed. The County has no long-term debt; interest remains $130,000.00, and U. of M. Cooperative Extension funding is $50,764.00. No changes were made to Employee Benefits or Reserves. The Total County Budget request is $11,347,673.14. A "program elimination" scenario for the Jail Budget was presented as a response to requested reductions, not a recommendation. This includes eliminating the VOA/re-entry program (-$291,000.00), Community Liaison Program (-$95,000.00), and Restorative Justice MOU (-$42,000.00), while increasing overtime by $88,000.00, raising inmate medical to $400,000.00, and removing $75,000.00 in capital outlay. Discussion emphasized that these cuts would result in loss of approximately $109,500.00 in annual revenue, potential loss of up to $4 million in grant funding, and added costs for contracted services such as food and cleaning. The facility would be reduced to a 72-hour holding facility as required by statute, with ongoing fixed costs and no ability to convert to a minimum-security facility. It was clarified that previously reported state funding of $788,000.00 is biennial, with the correct annual amount being $394,446.50, affecting prior budget comparisons. Members noted that most reductions have already been made and that further cuts would require eliminating programs or positions, often resulting in minimal savings due to overtime and operational requirements. Staffing levels are already below national averages. Budget options currently range from approximately 14% to 17% increases, and reducing below 17% was viewed as likely unrealistic. The committee acknowledged that while program elimination is not preferred, it may be necessary to meet lower targets, and achieving a sub-10% increase would require significant service reductions.

****Motion T. Parker to cite one of their last meetings for the Commissioners to present back to the Budget Committee the original budget versions of 4 & 5 and give them the version 6 of what the outcomes are. With that motion, he would like to have a breakdown based on evaluation of each one of the towns for their percentage of this budget because, talking about fiscal responsibility, each person should know what their part of that pie is.** Discussion: Commissioner Kelley asked if the motion could be condensed. Commissioner Parker said he moved to present back to the Budget Committee versions 4 & 5 and now version 6. Commissioner Kelley stated that he didn't want to accept those cuts. Commissioner Parker said this was the response to them kicking it back to the Commissioners, which is version 6. So now there's 4 & 5 and now the response back to their 10% which is version 6. He was posing the motion to give it back to them but thought that they need to have the breakdown of each one of those numbers broken down so that each town knows what cut of the pie they're getting. **Motion failed due to lack of second.**

Commissioner Kelley opened discussion stating he did not want to present Version 6 (14.53%) and preferred Versions 4 and 5. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb noted those versions were now inaccurate due to correction in the biennial funding figure. Commissioner Parker added that proposed reductions would be lower than 10% once adjusted for the loss of state funding.

Discussion clarified that budgets submitted to the Budget Committee are recommendations, not votes. County Clerk B. Arseneau confirmed that, by statute, the Budget Committee has authority to make final adjustments. Commissioner Parker emphasized that lower-budget scenarios are not proposals but responses to requested cuts. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb stated a preference to recommend a budget the Commissioners support, along with additional information and an open column for Budget Committee adjustments. Commissioner Kelley asked whether to move forward with Version 4 or 5 and noted the need to correct the biennial figure ($732,466) by splitting it. Finance Director K. Hunt continued updating figures during discussion. Commissioner Parker requested input from Deputy Chief Matt Curtis, and County Clerk B. Arseneau left to contact him.

****Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to go to a recess while waiting for M. Curtis at 12:04 p.m. Unanimous.**

Reconvened at 12:19 p.m.

Finance Director K. Hunt presented updated budget percentages after correcting the biennial state revenue, she reviewed prior options of 13%, 17%, and 30%. Version 4 (originally 13.64%) that was revised to 16.8% (Version 4A) and then adjusted to 16.67% after adding back $75,000.00 in capital outlay. Version 4A includes use of $100,000.00 in opioids funds, no further reductions to employee benefits (~$3.9 million), a $1,500.00 Communications Center reduction, and a $5,000.00 Probate reduction. Version 5 included deeper cuts, including use of $125,000.00 from reserves, lower jail funding (~$611,766.00 vs. $786,766.00 in Version 4), and reduced employee benefits (~$1.2M vs. $1.5M+), which members viewed as unsustainable. Updated jail costs increased to approximately $3.5 million due to corrected state funding ($394,446.50 vs. prior higher estimate.)

Commissioner Kelley noted that eliminating programs (VOA, Restorative Justice, liaison) could reduce approximately $400,000.00 lowering the increase to about 12.67%, but would also reduce revenue and services. Clarified these are hypothetical “program elimination” scenarios requested by the Budget Committee, not recommendations. The Finance Director emphasized that most reductions have already been made, including staffing cuts and position eliminations across departments. Members agreed there is little remaining flexibility without impacting services, and further workforce reductions may increase overtime costs. Chief Deputy M. Curtis confirmed staffing cannot be reduced below minimum coverage requirements and that cuts would not produce meaningful savings; service reductions would be required. Projected county revenue of $732,000.00 will offset the tax impact, meaning the 16.67% increase will be lower for towns.

Consensus supported advancing Version 4A (16.67%) as a realistic scenario, clearly labeled as such, with additional materials showing town-by-town impacts and an option for Budget Committee adjustments. Two motions were proposed:

1. Present the 16.67% (Version 4A) budget to the Budget Committee
2. Provide estimated impacts to towns and taxpayers

****Motion T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb that whatever budget is submitted to the Committee, there is an estimated state evaluation breakdown for each of the towns for their portion of the County budget. Unanimous.**

****Motion T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to send to the Budget Committee version 4A at the amount of 16.67% for a grand total. Unanimous.**

****Motion T. Parker as a result of not coming to the Budget Committee’s $14 million, the Commissioners’ present to them the repercussions, either stated by Sheriff Trundy if he wants to or by the Commissioners, but this is the real repercussion of not having a budget. Commissioner B. Pinkham Bebb did not second the motion because it was unclear to her and not very specific. Motion failed due to lack of second.**

Commissioner Parker said he would not restate his motion and expressed concern about Sheriff Trundy presenting hypothetical cuts, noting the budget already reflects that further reductions would require layoffs or increased costs with little remaining savings. He emphasized that presenting impacts should not fall solely on the Sheriff and that either commissioners or staff should communicate the consequences of additional cuts.

Commissioner Pinkham Bebb sought clarification on whether the Sheriff’s hypothetical scenarios should be presented. No further questions were raised by the Commissioners. Sheriff Trundy joined via zoom, clarified that the document provided outlines potential cuts at the Budget Committee’s request and is not a recommendation. Sheriff Trundy stated he believes it is important to explain the real impacts of reductions, including potential loss of services, and noted he has previously provided detailed justification of his budget. He expressed concern that without clear communication, the public will not understand the consequences of cuts before a public hearing. He also agreed that a 16% proposed increase may face pushback, but emphasized the need for transparency in what reductions would mean.

Commissioner Parker reiterated that if the Sheriff is allowed to speak on impacts, all department heads should have the same opportunity. The Commissioners agreed. Sheriff Trundy responded that, as an elected official overseeing the largest portion of the budget, he feels a responsibility to speak on behalf of his department, though acknowledged the concern. Commissioner Pinkham Bebb concluded that it is ultimately the commissioners’ responsibility to defend and present the budget.

5.5. Commissioners’ New Business

a) Public Comment and Participation Policy discussion – (Already Discussed)

b) Commissioner Pinkham Bebb spoke about public participation via Zoom for public hearings and what possibilities there are. She asked if there was a way for Islesboro to participate in the meetings. IT Director J. Bailey was called in and he stated that Zoom is currently used and people could register. The next Budget Committee/Public Hearing is currently scheduled for Friday, 3/27/26 at 6:00 p.m. which does raise concerns for Islesboro due to cost for them to participate in person, as renting a boat would be required due to regular ferry hours. Commissioner Kelley asked if this would be limited to County residents and how to control this and not let it run too late into the evening. County Clerk B. Arseneau read from the current Remote Participation Policy that was just approved in January 2026. *"#5 Remote participation/input generally will only be allowed by the county commissioners, county department heads and county clerk (or when absent the county clerks designate) If public input is allowed at any meeting where remote participation is allowed, the county will provide notice of public input being allowed and an effective means of communication between the members of the body and the public. It is the responsibility of the public to possess their own technological means to tie into remote proceedings either telephonically or by video conferencing."* The Commissioners would have to put out the information that's being discussed, it will be allowed for this meeting during this time period, and include any other stipulations required. IT Director J. Bailey spoke about the statute and was not sure Zoom participation could be limited to one locality. Commissioner Kelley expressed concern that the wording says "telephonically" and asked if the County had to provide a phone number. He felt if someone is speaking, he would prefer to see them. Commissioner Parker wondered what would happen since there is a vacant seat in District 1 for the Budget Committee and if Islesboro was to fill it, they couldn't come and meet all of their meetings. They have a right to zoom in, and the right to participate no different than any other town. (Agreed by all) Commissioner Pinkham Bebb stated that seat needs to be offered to Northport first, as it is that Town's vacancy, and County Clerk B. Arseneau confirmed noting that it is up to the Budget Committee to fill that vacancy. Commissioner Kelley will contact Budget Committee Chair Bob Kurek with the short list of items brought up in today's Court Session.

6. Motion: T. Parker/K. Kelley to adjourn 1:06 p.m. Unanimous

Respectfully submitted by ____________________ Danielle Murray, Waldo County Office Associate