

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
MAY 18, 2023
(For more detailed information, see recording on waldocountyme.gov)

PRESENT: Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman), Amy R. Fowler, and Betty I. Johnson. County Clerk Barbara Arseneau took the minutes.

Call to Order: Commissioner Shorey called the court session to order at 9:00 a.m.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Stephanie Cross reported the following: The County checkbook General Fund balance is \$412,108.76, and the Jail/MCRRC checkbook General Fund balance is \$158,305.66. Normally she would present the year-to-date expenditures because there are many invoices that have been paid but not entered into the finance software yet, so she hopes to do that before the next warrant.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE:

The total 2023 Tax Anticipation Note is \$560,000.00, total borrowed from the County and Jail/MCRRC is \$ 2,460,843.05, or 45%, and the total YTD interest is \$16,263.24.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to file the Finance Report. Unanimous.**

WARRANTS

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the May 11, 2023 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant in the amount of \$47,185.07. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the May 11, 2023 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant in the amount of \$67,183.55. Unanimous.**

The County Payroll for May 11, 2023 was \$169,769.53.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve payment of the May 11, 2023 County payroll in the amount of \$169,769.53. Unanimous.**

The MCRRC Payroll for May 11, 2023 was \$46,715.91.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve payment of the May 11, 2023 MCRRC/Jail payroll in the amount of \$46,715.91. Unanimous.**

The Commissioners asked that the payrolls be included in the total warrant amounts, so that would reduce the warrants to two total as was previous practice. They thanked S. Cross for doing an excellent job, and she said that all the staff and Commissioner Fowler had been very helpful to her.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT AND NEW HIRE

Human Resources Director Annette McLaggan and Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey were present. A. McLaggan reported the following:

1. Patrol Deputy Dennis Townsend has successfully completed field training and is eligible to receive the first half of the sign on bonus in the amount of \$7,500.00.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve paying Patrol Deputy Dennis Townsend the first half of the sign on bonus in the amount of \$7,500.00. Unanimous.**

2. Patrol Deputy Travis Spencer has been selected to fill the Corporal position at the Waldo County Sheriff's Office effective May 21, 2023 at \$29.95 per hour. He will continue to keep the Sheriff's Office canine and the stipend for that.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve Deputy Travis Spencer being promoted to Corporal effective May 21, 2023 at \$29.95 per hour. Unanimous.**

3. Detective Frank Pellerin completed one year of employment and is eligible to receive the remainder of his sign on bonus in the amount of \$7,500.00.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve paying Detective Frank Pellerin the remainder of his sign on bonus in the amount of \$7,500.00. Unanimous.**

4. Corrections Officer Seth Curra reached the 12-year pay step on May 8, 2023 with a pay increase to \$23.05 per hour. Noted by the Commissioners.

5. Prosecutorial Assistant/Supervisor Eric Harvey recommended hiring Audra Dawson as Victim Witness Advocate at the District Attorney's Office effective June 5, 2023 at the Classification VII 1-year pay rate of \$23.37 per hour due to work experience. Commissioner Fowler asked if the VOCA (Victims of Crime Act) Grant paid for part of this position and E. Harvey said he believed so.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to hire Audra Dawson as Victim Witness Advocate effective June 5, 2023 at the 1-year rate of \$23.37 per hour. Unanimous.**

6. Maine Municipal Association is offering human resources training June 22, 2023 in Bangor for \$95.00, which A. McLaggan wished to attend. The Commissioners authorized this, stating that they encourage training for employees.

7. A. McLaggan is working on grant reimbursements for training through the "Alfond" and has been submitting many from department heads.

8. Payroll has services to issue payments directly through the portal. One check currently comes through Fed Ex for \$39.00 just for the County to turn around and send it to the vendor. A. McLaggan requested authorization to set payments up through the portal for Colonial Life and Mission to pull those funds out of the proper account. It would cost less and be more streamlined at no additional cost. The Commissioners authorized these changes and encouraged using the portal as much as possible for cost saving and time savings.

9. MainePERS: Employee and employer deductions are currently entered once a month manually. She would like to see if MainePERS can pull the payment information so it will streamline the process. With the changing of Finance Directors, she learned she must enter it by the 15th and would have to be physically present in the office for payment to take place. The Commissioners agreed that it would be secure to have payments be "pulled" and or "pushed" at no additional cost and would eliminate the stress of either the Finance Director or HR Director being physically in the office for payment to occur.

SHERIFF'S REPORT AND NEW HIRE

Sheriff Jason Trundy was present to report the following:

1. Open Corporal Position: J. Trundy reiterated the request to promote Travis Spencer to Corporal as Canine Officer effective May 21, 2023. The Commissioners said they had approved this.

2. Agreement Between Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multi-County Jail Authority, Knox County and Waldo County: W. Shorey said he attended a recent meeting with the Sheriff, and it was a good discussion. A. Fowler asked if the union was in agreement with sending staff to work at another Correctional facility. J. Trundy said this was discussed a while ago and has not been an issue. Regarding inmate numbers, 40 Waldo County beds are guaranteed. Unused beds can be assigned for other county's inmates and Waldo would be reimbursed as long as Waldo has agreed to this. If the population increases, time is needed to deal with this. It will be evaluated as they go along, and all counties involved would need to be in agreement. Any reimbursement would be at the end of the year. To do what they are planning is very cutting edge and likely nowhere else in the country is this being done exactly this way. He hoped additional efficiencies will result throughout the system from this arrangement, including hopefully benefitting other counties who are understaffed and have overcrowded jails. Current issues with pre-trial numbers create very few opportunities for Waldo's Reentry Center to fill it's open slots. He and the Jail Administrators are trying to help with that situation and constantly evaluating how to increase those opportunities and help other counties. ****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the contract as presented, effective July 1, 2023. Unanimous.** Three (3) originals will be signed, printed, dated, and circulated for all the agencies to have an original contract.

3. B. Johnson asked for a short meeting with the Sheriff after the court session.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Midcoast Council of Governments (MCCOG) Planner Adi Philson was present along with Freedom Selectman Elaine Higgins. E. Higgins reported that Waldo Broadband Coalition is still working to obtain enough grants to get internet up and running, once the funding is in place. MCCOG Planner Adi Philson is assisting WBC. There is a lot of federal funding available, but they are missing \$3.2 million in local match funds, which can be in the form of federal loans, state funding, etc. that she is trying to work with the committee on. A. Fowler suggested checking with Eastern Maine Development Corp. B. Johnson said some of the reason MCEDD changed its mission and name is to change what it is able to do. A. Philson said that WBC's model is good for the more rural regions and briefly mentioned how the Waldo County towns are divided between EMDC, MCCOG, and Kennebec COG, which is confusing for the towns. B. Johnson would like to ask MCCOG to come and present what they are doing now with all the changes. A. Philson said the goal is to try to get people to work within their region and for the regions to coordinate together. She offered to come back and do a presentation for the Commissioners about culverts, as this is the number one concern of the municipalities.

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported correspondence as follows:

1. The New England Region Office of the Federal Aviation Administration sent a public notice of public comment related to upcoming changes to helicopter flight routes. B. Arseneau wasn't sure if the FAA sends these to all counties or if they don't realize Waldo County no longer owns property adjacent to the Belfast Airport.

2. Vacancy on 2024 Waldo County Budget Committee: B. Arseneau had been instructed to send out notices in advance to let towns know of upcoming vacancies on the 2024 Budget Committee. Lincolnville Town Administrator David Kinney responded, thanking the Commissioners and stating that they will notify them when they have made the selection to fill that vacancy. W. Shorey said he had also heard back from two towns in his district.

3. Current Grants: The Commissioners had asked B. Arseneau to work on researching all the current grant programs, history, and process for reimbursements and she has put a spreadsheet together, met with Sheriff's Secretary Michelle Hooper, who has been extremely helpful with law-enforcement-related grants, and also met with Stephanie Cross to go over this information.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. A. Fowler asked for an executive session at the end of the court session, to include the Human Resources Director.

2. W. Shorey reported A. McLaggan is working on the job description for the County Garden Manager. It will be part-time/seasonal, 8-hours, 3 days per week to manage the work at the Garden, plan, do the ordering, and set up the work schedule for the MCRCC residents to plant, weed, and harvest. It will have a 6-month probationary period. A law enforcement officer will continue to come with the residents. One County employee will be responsible for any spraying, etc. under the direction of Commissioner Shorey. There is also a plan to do some specific planting as ground cover to reduce weeds, which will be safe for the bees purchased for the garden. Potential pay was briefly discussed.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Communications Director Michael Larrivee was present and reported the following:

1. Dispatcher Vacancies: One new hire quit, but the other is doing very well. Another certified dispatcher may be interested in the vacant position.

2. The new radio system is coming along well except the Liberty area still has issues because the Liberty tower still hasn't been finished. American Tower has still not sent back approval to the contractor to do the work.

3. The old tower system will be dismantled starting in June. EMA Director D. Rowley has requested the old two-way radios, likely for the towns. There will be the old Motorola repeater system, antennas, cabling, spare parts etc. so M. Larrivee recommended giving them to the HAM radio operators in the County to see what they can use and do whatever they want with the rest. The Commissioners voted as follows:

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve allowing the EMA Director to take what he needs from the old tower system, and the remainder will be donated to the EMA HAM radio user group. Unanimous.**

4. M. Larrivee had inquired last month about whether there may be leftover ARPA funds for the tower system upgrade that could be used to purchase Zetron radios. The Commissioners said that this project had been more expensive than anticipated, they are still waiting to see if the Congressional Directed grant funds will come in and felt that any leftover ARPA funds should be utilized elsewhere. M. Larrivee explained that two computers died, couldn't be fixed and were due in 2024 to be upgraded as part of a 5-year plan. After this year, there won't be any support on it. RCM gave them one

computer to hold them over, and IT Director J. Bailey rebuilt a Windows 7 machine to get them by, but at some point, a \$47,000.00 refresh will need to be done and there are no funds in place at this time. M. Larrivee explained that funds should be put in place because every 5 years it needs to be refreshed, so he will do that going forward. He knew there was \$2 million available and about \$1 million had been used. Due to Finance Director turnover, the actual amount spent is not known. W. Shorey said he believed next year the budget will have to go up quite a bit. He asked how many positions are not filled at the Comm. Center and M. Larrivee said it is three (3), plus one employee is out sick for a while, but once the new trainee is on her own, he should be able to manage. He had stopped the hiring process because he could only train two at a time. If the certified dispatcher he is seeking is interested, he'd like to hire that person, but if not, advertising will probably be necessary. There are still signs posted outside the Comm. Center stating that they are hiring. Sign-on bonuses were briefly discussed.

5. M. Larrivee sent a letter to SBA via the attorney regarding the old tower site contract. The letter was well written and explained everything in full detail, but it's been almost two months and he's heard nothing. He hopes it is a dead issue but doesn't know where that stands.

6. The Congressional Directed funds paperwork was filled out through the COPS program back in May in the amount of \$165,000.00. A bank account has been set up to receive those funds when they come in.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT:

IT Director J-sun Bailey was present to report the following:

1. Phone lines are being worked on at the Swanville EMA location and they are waiting on internet to be connected to the physical cables.
2. Printer rebuilds have been done at the Registry of Probate, and the D.A.'s Office is being migrated over to the new server software.
3. He is ordering a new plotter for the EMA Office. He has researched purchase orders versus credit cards, and it compares about \$3,000.00 to \$4,000.00. He will go with whichever is the better deal, which the Commissioners agreed to.
4. Research is still being done for website hosts. One vendor in Maine has done websites for some local colleges and will provide a quote to just keep the County's website up to date. A. Fowler said that Belfast Soup Kitchen has a great website and asked J. Bailey to check with them. He explained that the current website is difficult to manage, and he doesn't have the time or extended knowledge to keep it updated. He will continue researching and will return with the anticipated quote.
4. Barracuda Spam and Archiving: The Barracuda contract is expiring, new enrollment would be a bit over \$6,700.00, and must be enrolled before the end of May not to experience up to a 10% increase. Microsoft provides a similar project that could save \$2.00 per user per month. Some other products include "impersonation protection". SOPHOS is currently being used for antivirus, and Microsoft offers its own which might eliminate the need for SOPHOS next year.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into Executive Session at 10:27 a.m. for discussion of non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(F). Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to come out of executive session at 10:43 a.m. Unanimous.**

A. McLaggan briefly explained LD 785 An Accountability to DHS. A committee is being formed for this, and supposedly includes three representatives such as a commissioner, administrator, and sheriff from each county. MCCA asked for a representative from each County to attend legislative meetings and testify for their county. The Commissioners were not aware of this, but it's been reported that Commissioners and Sheriffs had been notified. B. Johnson said she did not want to serve in this capacity because she will already be serving statewide in the Coastal County Workforce. The Commissioners asked that Commissioner Johnson to follow the lists of LD's that MCCA provides each County.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to designate Commissioner Betty Johnson as Legislative Liaison. Unanimous.**

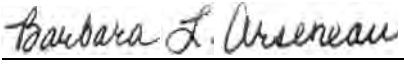
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 10:50 a.m. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to come out of executive session at 12:01 p.m. Unanimous.**

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reallocate responsibilities to incoming Treasurer Owen Smith to audit the invoices after the warrants. Passed by two, one opposed B. Johnson.** B. Johnson stated that the invoices should be reviewed and stamped.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to sign the general release and agreement provided by attorney Marchesi. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to adjourn at 12:02 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by  Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau