

WALDO COUNTY 2026-2027 BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

OCTOBER 24, 2025

6:00 P.M. TO 9:00 P.M.

Waldo County Commissioners Courtroom and Remote Teleconference (Zoom)

PRESENT: Budget Committee Members Bob Kurek (Chairperson), Mary Mortier, Breanna Bebb, Elizabeth Lenharr, Tammy Higgins, Brandy Bridges, Laura Greeley, (Douglas Thomas and Robyn Tarantino were absent.) Also present were County Commissioners Betty I. Johnson, Kevin J. Kelley, and Timothy A. Parker. Staff present were Finance Director Kari Hunt, IT Director J-sun Bailey, Facilities Manager Christopher Bryant, and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau to take minutes.

Call to Order/Review Minutes – Chairperson Bob Kurek called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

B. Kurek inquired about cash flow projections. K. Hunt said it was based on actual cash flow, when the County starts borrowing, and when they start paying it back. Slides were put up on the screen to review and were for 2024 and 2025 so far. In 2025, the County started borrowing in April and has not paid anything back yet. The County has not paid any back yet. Something to consider whether the whole thing has to be taken out early. Also important to consider is the fact that this is for 18 months, not 12. Very few towns start paying during September and October. Interest has varied based on the rate and when the County had to start borrowing.

There was brief discussion about waiting to discuss the Interest budget until later in the year, keeping in mind that Knox County doesn't have a quorum for its budget committee and will be restricted to the same budget as the current year, resulting in cuts - and this has already impacted the District 6 Coalition Jail Committee. It could possibly affect the Communications Center if they have to start taking some of Knox's calls. B. Kurek said that R. Tarantino had wanted to review the Interest budget in more detail just with the Finance Director and him, but he felt it should be brought before the whole committee.

The Commissioners stated that about 40% of the budget this year is Jail housing and health benefits. The changes in health brokers is going to bring savings but those are unknown at this point.

The Committee discussed the 18 months budget, that other counties who have done this spent a lot of time educating and explaining this to their towns, and while two of the Commissioners had spoken with several of the towns in their districts, committee members felt the County was behind in speaking with the towns, and that much more communication will be needed. There was brief discussion among the members about the committee possibly meeting after budget process is over to figure out how they can help the towns, but it there was concern expressed that not all towns are represented and many haven't heard much about the proposed fiscal year change.

B. Kurek said he'd like more information about Projected Revenue, more information about how many inmates who are pretrial, and other details he'd like the Sheriff to provide regarding this. K. Kelley reported that SMRT architectural firm did a study on all four jails in the District 6 Collaboration and will push this information out to the budget committee as soon as possible. This coming week K. Hunt will ask the Office Associate to pull all the Jail lines that had been extracted from the Jail. K. Hunt noted that two department heads need to add one position each and that is very important. B. Kurek asked if there are any unfilled positions that could be left unfilled, and if there are any services that could be curtailed. K. Kelley thought

some facilities projects may be able to be put off.

It was noted that there are a number of other counties in the news; Washington, Knox, Penobscot – all with budget issues. B. Kurek had an estimate sent from the State and noted that Belfast gained a little and Islesboro lost about the same amount as Belfast gained. He is trying to figure out how much each of the towns would be paying per thousand.

Approval of Minutes:

****MOTION: B. Kurek/T. Higgins to approve the October 9, 2025 Budget Committee Meeting Minutes as presented. Unanimous.**

****MOTION: B. Kurek/T. Higgins to approve the October 9, 2025 minutes as presented. Unanimous.**

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT BUDGET – Presented by Christopher Bryant.

Electricity: The committee noted that the Commissioners reduced it to \$6,500.00 and there is almost \$3,000.00 left. C. Bryant stated that CMP is expecting 13% to 22% increase, and he has estimated the budget at 15%. There was discussion on savings from the solar panels, which budget lines are over-budget and those that will be over-budget, including Sheriff, Communications Center, and Jail, and C. Bryant noted that the Committee had described some of his budget lines last year as “indefensible” but he had estimated correctly.

The Committee also discussed whether to handle things such as heat, air conditioning, water and sewer, and repairs in “groupings” rather than individual budget lines, but understood that they were divided out to help track the individual buildings, etc.

When asked about lighting, C. Bryant reported that LED’s have been installed when lights are being replaced.

The Budget Committee made the following changes:

Mileage was reduced to \$100.00 for 12 months and to \$50.00 for 6 months.

Meals was reduced to \$150.00 for 12 months and to \$75.00 for 6 months.

Electric-Commiss Ct was reduced to \$5,800.00 for 12 months and to \$3,150.00 for 6 months.

Electric-EMA was increased to \$650.00 for 12 months \$375.00 for 6 months.

Electric-Sheriff was reduced to \$13,000.00 for 12 months and increased to \$8,200.00 for 6 months.

Electric-Dispatch was increased to \$18,300.00 for 12 months and increased to \$8,000.00 for 6 months.

Water/Sewer- Sheriff was reduced to \$1,850.00 for 12 months and to \$1,000.00 for 6 months.

Water/Sewer-Dispatch was reduced to \$1,600.00 for 12 months and to \$800.00 for 6 months.

Tower Site Elect was reduced to \$10,800.00 for 12 months and to \$5,800.00 for 6 months.

Snow Removal-Commiss CT was reduced to \$1,100.00 for 12 months and to \$900.00 for 6 months.

Snow Removal-UofM Coop Ext was reduced to \$2,100.00 for 12 months and to \$2,000.00 for 6 months.

Elec RPS-EMA was reduced to \$500.00 for 12 months.

A/C lines were grouped together and reduced to \$2,500.00 for 2026 and to \$1,250.00 for 2027; the individual lines to be determined by the Facilities Manager.

Clean Main-Sheriff was reduced to 1,500.00 for 12 months and to \$800.00 for 6 months.

Clean Main-UofM was reduced to \$200.00 for 12 months and to \$100.00 for 6 months.

Clean Main-Dispatch was reduced to \$1,350.00 for 12 months and to \$650.00 for 6 months.

Clean Main-EMA was reduced to \$100.00 for 12 months and to \$50.00 for 6 months.

Heating Repairs lines were grouped together and reduced to \$6000.00 for 2026 and to \$3000.00 for 2027; the

individual lines to be determined by the Facilities Manager.

Postage was reduced to \$0.00 (zero).

Plumbing Repairs were grouped together and reduced to \$2,000.00 for 2026 and to \$1,000.00 for 2027; the individual lines to be determined by the Facilities Manager.

Fuel Sheriff was reduced to \$4,200.00 for 2026 and to \$3,500.00 for 2027.

Fuel UofM Coop Extension was reduced to \$2000.00 for 2026.

Office Supplies was reduced to \$800.00 for 2026 and to \$400.00 for 2027.

Electricity was reduced to \$33,000.00 for 2026.

Fuel oil/Heating oil was reduced to \$10,000.00 for 2026 and to \$5,700 for 2027.

Sewage was reduced to \$7,200.00 for 2026 and to \$4,800.00 for 2027.

Repairs Maint A/C was reduced to \$1,500.00 for 2026 and to \$750.00 for 2027.

Repairs Electrical was reduced to \$2,000.00 for 2026.

Generator Maintenance was reduced to \$300.00 for 2026 and to \$300.00 for 2027.

Parking Lots/Grounds/Snow was reduced to \$1,800.00 for 2026.

Total Facilities Budget Reduction was \$32,034.75

Meeting Schedule

October 25, start at 9:00 and end at 4:00 p.m.

Waldo Community Action Partners, Waldo County Firefighters Association, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation County Commissioners, Human Resources, and Employee Benefits.

November 8, start at 9:00 and end at 1:00 p.m.

Second Reviews with: Jail, Sheriff, Information Technology and any others the Committee has determined must return for additional review; any who cannot attend on 10/25/2025.

The Public Hearing date will be determined later and requires at least 3 weeks' lead time for notification to the media and public. It will likely be in December.

****MOTION: M. Mortier, B. Kurek, to adjourn at 8:39 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by Barbara L. Arseneau Waldo County Clerk
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