

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
SEPTEMBER 1, 2022**

PRESENT: Commissioners Amy R. Fowler (Chairman), William D. Shorey, and Betty I. Johnson (via teleconference). Also present were Freedom Selectperson Elaine Higgins, and County Clerk Barbara Arseneau to take minutes.

Call to Order: Commissioner Fowler called the court session to order at 10:00 a.m.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT AND 1080 BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present was Director Michael Larrivee, who started with the Communications Center Report.

1. The Mount Waldo Blueberry Broadcasting Contract was presented to the Commissioners at \$900.00 per month for 5 years, with no increases. The Commissioners will review and decide later.
2. Staffing is still the same. H.R. will run another add as only one application was received.
3. Dispatcher Noah Davis finished training so two additional dispatchers are working shifts, alleviating some overtime. N. Davis will now earn \$20.23 per hour, and then on September 28, 2022 he will reach the 6 month step with a pay increase to \$20.88 per hour.
4. The new tower system has been demonstrated and appears to be excellent. There was brief discussion on whether it will impact Fire and EMS. It is not digital, so installing the new antennas will greatly enhance coverage, and once the new equipment is installed, it will be even better. It is completely IP based and will eliminate a lot of “down” and “tech” time.
5. He previously reported that the Liberty SBA tower failed inspection. SBA expects the County to make the structural repairs on it. He didn’t think the County should expend that much money on it, so he and the radio consultant are looking at other towers in the Liberty/Palermo area and will get back to the Commissioners. They will also ask SBA if they will sell the Liberty tower at a reasonable price, in which case it could be fixed, and space rented to others. Freedom Selectperson Elaine Higgins asked if fiber optic could be used. M. Larrivee replied that it might, but for security compliance, it must be private so it cannot be hacked.

1076 COMMUNICATIONS CENTER BUDGET:

The total budget request was \$1,139,915.00. A. Fowler said she believed Schedule Express was no longer necessary as scheduling can be done through the new payroll system.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to cut line 4821 Scheduling Program by \$4,836.00.**

Passed by two, B. Johnson unavailable.

M. Larrivee explained that Schedule Express had alerted and notified employees when someone called in sick, which worked because employees don’t respond to Excel or phone calls. He said he will try to use the new payroll system.

Because the Comm. Center truck is relatively new, the Commissioners made reductions in lines 4200 Vehicle Maintenance and 4210 Vehicle Fuel.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reduce Vehicle Maintenance line 4200 by \$500.00 to \$2,000.00 and to reduce Vehicle Fuel line 4210 by \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 Passed by two; B. Johnson abstained because she was unable to hear the discussion.**

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve 1076 Communications Center with the afore-mentioned reductions. Passed by two. (B. Johnson was unavailable.)**

SHERIFF'S REPORT AND 1075 BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present were Sheriff Jeffrey Trafton and Chief Deputy Jason Trundy. The total budget request was \$2,319,020.00. J. Trundy reported an increase in line 3002 Educational Stipends, largely due to the K-9. Specialty training is also included in this line and the budget was prepared to cover all who may qualify.

W. Shorey said he thought the Vehicle Fuel request was high and could be reduced by \$10,000.00.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reduce line 4210 Vehicle Fuel by \$10,000.00 to \$110,000.00. Unanimous.**

J. Trundy referenced previous discussion about the COPS grant for two additional positions, and said those positions are included in this budget. If the grant funds are received, the budget request shows the funds backed out of it. The grant is for 5 years with \$125,000.00 per deputy for wages and benefits for the first 3 years. This should afford time to discuss things in case the grant is not awarded.

J. Trafton explained the planned merge of State Police troops. They are creating a new interstate troop, so the County definitely needs the two additional patrol deputy positions because he strongly believes that it will be impossible to cover the whole territory.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve the 1075 Sheriff Budget with the one reduction in the amount of \$10,000.00. Unanimous.**

1050 JAIL BUDGET:

The total request was \$3,649,410.00. J. Trundy reported that the payroll will be up just over 1%. K. Trussell said that she added more for the benefits part of the budget. J. Trundy noted that personnel, maintenance, and a few other contracts, such as the Liaison and Maine Pretrial, have increased. K. Trussell explained that electronic monitoring is run through the reserves rather than the operating budget because it is handled directly with the person being monitored, and the Sheriff has applied for some grants that cover expenses until they are paid by the person. J. Trundy reported that updates to the camera system have all been performed for the time being.

****W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to accept 1050 Corrections as presented. Unanimous.**

1015 DISTRICT ATTORNEY BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present were District Attorney Natasha Irving, Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey, and Legal Secretary Felicia Gray. The total budget request was \$262,250.00. F. Gray explained that Telephone line 4315 has increased mainly because work cell phones must be purchased for staff based on new policy regarding no email on non-county devices for Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) law compliance. When audited, they learned that nothing should be on personal phones. Work phone calls are also received after hours, and more work is being done on cell phones rather than on computers. The Victim/Witness Advocates also use phones to call and receive calls from victims, etc. Nobody wants to carry around two phones but it's necessary.

Document Disposal line 4845: E. Harvey said that in preparation for moving to the Public Safety Building, old records that don't need to be retained must be disposed from the Old Superior Courthouse basement, he's increased Document Disposal line 4845. Disposal is paid by the bin.

Witness Fees line 4925: N. Irving said they never know when Witnesses will cost a lot of money. Some move out of state and then are called back for court, etc. and even the budgeted amount may not be enough in some cases.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to reduce Office Supply line 5335 by \$250.00. Passed by two, B. Johnson unavailable.**

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve the total budget minus the \$250.00 reduction. Passed by two, B. Johnson unavailable.**

Discussion about Restorative Justice Project: N. Irving asked if the Sheriff's Office requested half the funding cost as originally thought because if not, it wouldn't make sense for her to budget half. A. Fowler said that the Sheriff's Office reviewed it and did not request funds in that budget.

N. Irving said she's heard that there will be a large increase in employees' health insurance premiums and expressed concern for her employees. The Commissioners said that nothing is set in stone yet; they are reviewing every angle of the health insurance and how to move ahead. W. Shorey said the health program has only gone up 1% each year since it started. It is an excellent plan, must be paid for and whatever the employee percentage is; it will be small compared with other counties. A. Fowler said they asked their insurance adjuster to find out what similar counties are paying, and Waldo County is paying half what they are.

1010 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present was EMA Director Dale Rowley. The total budget request was \$163,940.00. D. Rowley reported that the increase was all related to personnel. Line 4620 Tower Site Operations was discussed, and \$3,200.00 is for Whitney Hill Tower site, which will serve as a relay tower for EMA. He reduced other non-salary lines to keep the increase at zero. The big increase is the GIS Planner. LEPC currently pays for 4 hours of that salary, but D. Rowley requested that the County pay for this, as it takes months before the State reimburses their portion. Vehicle Maintenance line 4200 has been reduced, as well.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the 1010 EMA Budget as presented. Passed by two; B. Johnson was unavailable.**

D. Rowley provided a brief report on the Swanville project and projected that the building should be enclosed and winterized before winter. He has taken and dropped of water test kits from both wells and is waiting for the results to be emailed to him.

Human Resources Director KelLee Gray informed the Commissioners that Commissioner Johnson had to leave the court session.

2020 COMMISSIONERS BUDGET REQUEST 2023

The total request was \$324,801.00. County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reviewed the budget lines with the Commissioners. The Toshiba printer photocopier shared by Finance, H.R. and the Commissioners Offices is about 12 years old and during recent maintenance, they were told that parts are almost impossible to find. She's asked for quotes to both purchase and/or lease a new machine and is still waiting for those. The 14-year old printer she used to have in her office has not worked since last November. The IT Director has received the part for it but is so busy that he hasn't had time to fix it, so she must depend on the shared Toshiba. The Commissioners decided to hold off purchasing another printer for another year. After other brief discussion, the Commissioners voted as follows:
****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reduce line 4105 Mileage by \$500.00, reduce line 5335 Office Supplies by \$250.00, and reduce line 4722 Liability Insurance by \$2,000.00. Unanimous.**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Finance Director Karen Trussell reported that the County Checkbook balance is \$54,430.05, and the Jail Checkbook balance is \$30,342.60.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE:

The total Tax Anticipation Note is \$5,500,000.00. \$4,620,000.00 has been borrowed; \$2,775,000.00 by the County and \$1,845,000.00 by Corrections.

County Appropriations/Revenue:

61% of the County 2022 budget has been expended and it could be 67%. 91.48% of the County revenue has been received at this time.

Corrections Appropriations/Revenue:

58% of the Corrections 2022 budget has been expended and could be 67%. 19.31% of the Corrections revenue has been received at this time. Interest owed is \$16,783.05 as of August 30, 2022.

\$813,517.91 in Community Corrections funds has been received. There will be no more borrowing from the TAN for the Jail this year.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to file the Financial Report. Unanimous.**

WARRANTS

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the August 31, 2022 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant and August 18, 2022 payroll in the amount of \$354,910.73. Unanimous.**

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the August 31, 2022 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant and August 18, 2022 payroll in the amount of \$107,259.81. Unanimous.**

1025 FINANCE BUDGET 2023

K. Trussell reported that the largest part of the increase is her 20-year pay step.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the 1025 Finance Budget as presented. Unanimous.**

FACILITIES REPORT & 1030 FACILITIES BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present was Keith Nealley. The total budget request was \$334,168.00. K. Nealley reported that the Facilities Technician resigned effective August 31st. Some excellent applications have been received, but the starting wage may not be high enough. Regarding the full-time custodial position, he is continuing to manage with the P/T person for now. Electrical costs are up about 11.5%. According to his monthly graph analysis, last year's average was \$400.00 per month and is almost double that now. The Commissioners felt they could deduct \$500.00 from 4302 Electric - U of M Cooperative Extension, \$1,000.00 from 4305 Electric - Superior Court, and \$1,000.00 from 4307 Electric – Sheriff. K. Nealley noted an increase based on anticipated costs for snow removal, heating fuel, etc. Fuel is up about \$7,000.00. He budgeted \$5.00 per gallon and propane at \$2.00 per gallon. Today fuel is about \$4.00 per gallon. The Commissioners commended K. Nealley for his planning.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the 1030 Facilities Budget with \$2,500.00 in reductions as discussed in Electrical for 1030 budget. Unanimous.**

K. Nealley reported two bats in the Old Superior Courthouse and received a quote to plug all the holes in the eaves but because it was \$15,500.00, he ordered sonic units at \$59.00 each instead.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT & 1035 IT BUDGET REQUEST 2023

IT Manager J-sun Bailey reviewed the budget request first. The total budget request was \$86,246.00. Most of the increase is the 3% COLA, and the travel line increased for the anticipated 5% increase for the 2023 Motorola Summit Conference. It's no longer part of the maintenance fee and is invoiced separately. Otherwise, he had nothing else to report at this time.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pass the 1035 Information Technology budget as presented. Unanimous.**

REGISTRY OF PROBATE 1070 BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present was Register of Probate Sharon Peavey. The total budget request was \$299,390.00. Most of the cost is related to personnel because three employees are due for pay step increases. She reported that it's been extremely busy, they were short-staffed followed by training a new employee, but things should soon be better.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pass 1070 Probate budget as presented. Unanimous.**

1080 ADVERTISING & PROMOTION BUDGET REQUEST 2023

1080-4715 WALDO COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERS BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Present were Michael Hallundbaek, and Development Director Marina Kinney. The total budget request was \$5,000.00. M. Hallundbaek said that they submitted a request of \$5,000.00, the same as previous years. WCAP is in the process of gathering numbers from the previous year.

M. Kinney reported that WCAP is gearing up for the Neighbor for Neighbor Program and coordinating holiday projects in the communities. M. Hallundbaek said that due to COVID, they couldn't do one location for drop-off boxes for Thanksgiving and Christmas, so they worked with local grocery stores and others who packed boxes, coordinated with local drivers, fire departments, etc. and distributed thousands of boxes that way. This kept too many people from getting together in one place and kept the program going. They work with Belfast Soup Kitchen and do complimentary projects. The Soup Kitchen helped them with their application for outreach in the community. They also have their own soup kitchen on Field Street and helped distribute food to people with the empty buses during COVID. They try to get out to the outlying towns with distribution events.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pass the 1080-4715 Waldo Community Action Partners budget as presented. Unanimous.**

1080-4719 WALDO COUNTY FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

B. Arseneau said she sent notification of the annual County Budget process twice to Liberty Fire Chief Bill Gillespie and had not received any budget requests. A. Fowler said that she would support the Waldo County Firefighters Association by requesting funding in the amount of \$5,000.00.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to fund \$5,000.00 for 1080-4719 Waldo County Firefighters Association. Unanimous.**

1080-4720 MIDCOASTCOG BUDGET REQUESTS 2023

B. Arseneau stated that she sent notification of the annual County Budget process twice to MidcoastCOG, formerly MCEDD. She didn't hear back from them and later learned that it went to their spam mail, so she had not received a budget request.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded not to fund 1080-4720 MidcoastCOG in 2023. Unanimous.**

1080-4721 BELFAST CREATIVE COALITION

B. Arseneau said she had sent notification of the annual County Budget process twice to Belfast Creative Coalition but had not received a budget request from them. A. Fowler said she couldn't continue to agree to fund something she didn't think was utilized in such places as Burnham, Freedom, or Palermo. W. Shorey agreed.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded not to fund 1080-4720 Belfast Creative Coalition in 2023. Unanimous.**

1080-4716 EASTERN MAINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP.

Present was Vicki Rusbult and Lee Umphrey. The total budget request was \$5,000,000. L. Umphrey reported that EMDC has worked on a proposal for Congressional Delegation spending up to \$1.3 million for the Stockton Springs project, has worked with 22 businesses in Waldo County this past year, distributed over \$5 million in COVID-related relief funds, which Commissioner Shorey was part of, and is doing a lot with Waldo County. There was a question last year about the financial standing and the experience Commissioner Shorey had during EMDC's financial transition through two financial directors and starting a new financial tracking system. EMDC is likely the most financially stable it's ever been. In the last 1.5 years, EMDC brought in over \$10 million in program funds. They were disappointed that Waldo County didn't allocate funds last year but are still doing good work in the community and will continue to do so. EMDC works with Belfast, Swanville, Frankfort, Brooks, Islesboro, Jackson, Knox, Liberty, Montville, Morrill, Prospect, Searsport, Stockton Springs, Waldo, Winterport, and Monroe. A. Fowler asked if EMDC approaches the Towns for funding, and L. Umphrey said no. The only fee for service paid by a town would be for comprehensive planning. EMDC provides information, is a resource, and helps with grants.

A. Fowler explained that the Budget Committee has occasionally asked why the County is paying for services that only some of the towns use. She appreciates what EMDC does but didn't think she would move the request forward. L. Umphrey said he believed the County was "an overarching entity" so that all the towns would benefit. A. Fowler said she would be willing to put EMDC's information on the County's web site but wouldn't vote to fund it.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded not to fund EMDC's budget request for 2023. Unanimous.**

2005 UNIVERSITY OF MAINE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Present was Vina Lindley, who thanked the Commissioners for the recent work done on the Extension building. The total budget request was \$58,050.00. She explained that it had increased from the previous year because the University contracts staff, and administrative contracts increased substantially from \$14.00 to \$17.00 per hour last year. They have been paying it all along but are requesting assistance with that, noting that they've been able to hire excellent staff.

****W. Shorey, A. Fowler seconded to accept the 2005 University of Maine Cooperative Extension as presented. Unanimous.**

2035 WALDO COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Present was Administrative Director Medea Steinman, Chair of the Board Andy Reed, and Treasurer Gene Randal. The total budget request was \$26,000.00. Submissions included the request letter highlighting the previous year's program delivery, the Annual Report, and PFAS resources and guides. 24 clients were served in 163.5 service hours, including 13 towns and 12 partner organizations. The 2-year DEP grant for Unity Pond ends this year. Data is being reviewed, and action plans are being discussed. The plant sale was successful, they hosted the Midcoast Regional Envirothon, and the Conservation Landscape Certification Program is going well. They will be digitizing their aerial photo collection. A. Fowler spoke briefly about recent County of Waldo aerial photos.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept 2035 Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation District budget as presented. Unanimous.**

1090 AUDIT BUDGET REQUEST 2023

K. Trussell said that she was keeping 1090 the same as last year at \$8,500.00. The Auditor has been very short-staffed, so the 2020 and 2021 audits have not been completed yet. Funds may need to be moved to a reserve to pay for the 2021 audit once it's completed.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the 1090 Audit budget as presented. Unanimous.**

1095 DEBT SERVICE BUDGET REQUEST 2023 (The County has no debt.)

2000 INTEREST BUDGET REQUEST 2023

K. Trussell said she is keeping the same at \$22,000.00. She thought it could be reduced to about \$15,000.00. The total cost is split with the Jail, so she also requested to decrease the Jail Interest by \$3,000.00 when they reviewed that budget. W. Shorey asked if she knew what interest rates would be and she said she'd know better in November. A. Fowler thought it would be safer to reduce it to \$19,000.00. As they get closer to the Public Hearing, K. Trussell can look again at the numbers.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reduce by \$3,000.00 to \$19,000.00. Unanimous.**

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the 2000 Interest budget with the \$3,000.00 reduction. Unanimous.**

2025 EMPLOYEE BENEFITS BUDGET REQUEST 2023

The total budget request is \$1,861,319.00. A. Fowler noted that the said County has been self-funded since 2008. The Commissioners have kept costs down for many years, so there will be an increase up

to \$1,048,469.00 in 2023. Other counties are paying at least double in rates, with percentages of increase each year is in the double digits. The Commissioners are still trying to work out how they will handle the employees' portion. Employees currently pay 15%. For example, the increase for Employee and Spouse may roughly increase by about \$20.00 per paycheck.

K. Trussell said MEPEERS, MEPEERS Insurance, and FICA are all based on wages. Workers Comp has been kept low because some safety policies were recently written.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pass 2025 Employee Benefits as presented. Unanimous.**

2045 RESERVES REQUEST 2023

K. Trussell said she waits until property taxes have come in before funding the Reserves so that it isn't being borrowed and costing the County. The total budget request is \$25,000.00.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pass 2045 Reserves as presented. Unanimous.**

PROJECTED REVENUE BUDGET REQUEST 2023

Total 2023 Projected Revenue is \$750,943.00. K. Trussell explained EMA projected revenue is dropping, and she noted the Federal Fiscal year effects two months that are not counted in the County's budget. Benefits on the Crime Computer Unit, etc. come out of the budget and the offset is shown in the revenue. The Auditor agrees with the process. The Commissioners accepted the Projected Revenue as presented.

RECORDS PRESERVATION BUDGET 2040

The total budget request was \$7,000.00. B. Arseneau explained that she plans to move the records from the Old Superior Courthouse to the new County Archive before winter, some equipment has ordered, and the 2022 funds will be expended before the end of 2022. The Commissioners reduced the 2023 budget to leave \$4,000.00 for microfilming.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to reduce \$3,000.00, bringing the total 2040 budget to \$4,000.00. Unanimous.**

1070 REGISTRY OF DEEDS BUDGET

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the Registry of Deeds budget as presented. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Present was Human Resources Director KelLee Gray.

1. Facilities Technician Job Description Update: The Commissioners signed the updated job description. Applications close tomorrow. Some applications have been received and interviews will start soon. There was brief discussion of the starting wage and possible adjustments that may be needed. The Commissioners authorized K. Gray to increase the wage a few dollars per hour.

2. David Wight has resigned as P/T Patrol Officer effective August 19, 2022.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the resignation of Part-time Patrol Officer David Wight. Unanimous.**

3. Victim Witness Advocate Kathleen Greeley submitted her resignation August 30, 2022, to be effective September 13, 2022. Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey has asked that the Victim Witness Advocate job description be updated, and K. Gray agreed that it should be done.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the resignation of Kathleen Greeley effective September 13, 2022. Unanimous.**

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported correspondence as follows:

1. Bruce Flaherty suggested some alternatives for the Spirit of America Foundation Tribute with COVID continuing, one of which was to wait until Spring in 2023. B. Arseneau felt that April would be a better time of year to hold this going forward, as fall is so busy. The Commissioners agreed.

2. The American Red Cross of Northern and Eastern Maine in Bangor has requested donations from the County of Waldo. B. Arseneau will send the standard letter explaining the budget request process.

3. A letter received on August 30, 2022 from Jueswi Person Specul of Morgantown, West Virginia regarding a Declaration of Secession had been forwarded to the Commissioners by email. The Commissioners stated that they did not intend to entertain any discussion on that.

4. The Commissioners' mileage is due tomorrow.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

B. Arseneau had emailed minutes from the August 17, 2022 Special Court Session to the Commissioners for review.

***W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the minutes from the August 17, 2022 Special County Commissioners Court Session. Unanimous.**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. A. Fowler noted that 600 bags of Styrofoam trash that had blown around in the Town of Brooks has been picked up by the volunteer group called "From Above". There are not enough funds available for disposing them.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to pay \$350.00 for cleanup. Unanimous.**

2. The Commissioners discussed the temporary trial of starting court sessions at 10:00 a.m. instead of 9:00 a.m., noted that it was not working out for Commissioner Johnson to attend, and decided the sessions will go back to starting at 9:00 a.m. starting with the next court session.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to start Commissioners Court Sessions at 9:00 a.m. beginning with the next court session. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to adjourn at 1:35 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Barbara L. Arseneau Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau