

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
JANUARY 16, 2025**

PRESENT: Commissioners Betty I. Johnson (Chairman), Kevin J. Kelley, Timothy A. Parker.
County Clerk Barbara Arseneau took the minutes.

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

AGENDA CHANGES:

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to accept agenda with no changes. Unanimous.**

EMERGENCY PLANNING

EMA Director Dale Rowley spoke about the following:

1. Long-term Power Outage Plan, an annex to the Emergency Operating Plan for events lasting longer than 3 weeks, which was emailed to the Commissioners.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to table a decision on the Long-term Power Outage Plan for two weeks to allow time to review. Unanimous.**

2. County Commissioners Briefing: D. Rowley submitted a list for an emergency management operations briefing he would like to hold for the Commissioners so they understand the role and how it works. He will send a poll with dates and times to choose from, aiming for a month from now.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Kari Hunt reported that this will not be her typical report as she has been out of the office. She submitted current appropriations reports for both County and Jail along with a 2026 budget schedule, statutes, and other things in the packet.

1. The County checkbook balance is \$423,401.85.

2. She will need to request an executive session.

3. The Commissioners were asked how they preferred to be reached for time sensitive matters, and the majority preferred a call. Time/date sensitive messages sent by email will have a "Read Receipt" so she will know they've read it.

4. The Annual County Report is in progress. The last one was for 2019, so she recommended a summary of the last 5 years rather than individual reports. Much of the information could be posted on the County website while printing only what's necessary. There was brief discussion on what was typically in the report and who receives it, including the towns. K. Kelley requested a copy of the 2019 Annual Report.

5. K. Hunt asked the Commissioners to consider researching what it would entail to change the County's Fiscal year. Currently significant funds are borrowed over 10 months each year, incurring a lot of interest. Changing to a fiscal year could shorten the timeframe before property taxes are received

from the towns. It can be handled as an 18-months budget or 6 months budget. All agreed research would be required, including how this could impact the municipalities, before deciding. By statute, Waldo County cannot send out invoices to the towns until September 1st.

2. The Health plan funds are very low, and a large amount was just paid from this account.

3. K. Hunt recommended consolidating some of the bank accounts and perhaps this could reduce borrowing. This should be discussed as a group in the future.

4. She requested that the 2026 budget schedule submitted to the Commissioners be approved, noting it is the same as 2025.

****B. Johnson moved, K. Kelley seconded to do the budget process for 2026 with the same plan as the previous year. Unanimous.**

5. K. Hunt requested bringing a vendor back in for another financial software demonstration and would like to include the Commissioners. K. Kelley said he would abstain from making any recommendations because his spouse works for one of those companies.

6. Tomorrow, January 17th, K. Hunt and Office Associate Liza Clark will be the only ones in the office so K. Hunt requested closing the office for a few hours to take L. Clark to see the other departments, likely from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The Commissioners authorized this.

7. A memo was received from Lt. Cody Laite regarding a K9 grant that Waldo County applied for and was awarded in the amount of \$32,000.00, to be received by the end of January or about 6 to 8 weeks prior to when the dog starts training. There is a warranty with this. If the dog fails a vet visit or training, the company will replace the dog. \$14,300.00 is needed for the dog in February so when the State Police picks up the dog, they must have the funds in hand. The recommendation was to fund this from the Detail Reserve.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to fund the K9 purchase for \$14,300.00 and to allow the Finance Director to transfer the funds when the grant comes in.** Brief discussion on what happens to the dog upon retirement. Historically it is sold to the officer the dog was assigned to. It was recommended in the future to include wording that holds the County blameless once the dog has been sold, as is. **Unanimous.**

8. Maine Municipal Association (MMA) has requested the County make arrangements to pay workers compensation by ACH rather than by check. K. Hunt said she's comfortable paying via ACH; plus it will save the County money not processing and mailing a check.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to utilize ACH to pay MMA. Unanimous.**

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to accept and file the Financial Report. Unanimous.** All warrants for 2024 are closed. Any straggling 2024 invoices must be paid from the 2025 budget.

WARRANTS

Previous warrants from January 7, 2025 were not signed, so the Commissioners signed them.

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to authorize payment of the January 16, 2025 final 2024 County accounts payable and reserves warrant in the amount of \$21,695.71. Unanimous.**

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to authorize payment of the January 16, 2025 final 2024 MCRRC/Jail accounts payable and reserves warrant in the amount of \$187,290.87. Unanimous.**

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to authorize payment of the January 16, 2025 County accounts payable and reserves warrant in the amount of \$92,834.46 and payroll in the amount of \$195,931.53 for a total of \$288,765.99. Unanimous.**

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to authorize payment of the MCRRC/Jail January 16, 2025 accounts payable and reserves warrant in the amount of \$80,830.59 and payroll in the amount of \$47,228.34 for a total of \$128,058.93. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Human Resources Director Annette McLaggan reported the following:

1. Communication Center job descriptions and an evaluation form were submitted to the Commissioners. Each county department has its own evaluation form specifically designed for that department. Discussion of whether there should be both department head evaluations and employee self-evaluations, how long the forms should be, the content, and if these should be done at each employees hire anniversary. All the Commissioners are committed to working with the Human Resources Director on these forms and job descriptions and it was suggested that this be done during a workshop.

2. The Communications Director requested that H.R. post the vacant dispatch position, and recruit for a Dispatch Supervisor. A job description for that position was created by H.R. and submitted to the Commissioners, Union Steward, and union to review. The Union believes it depicts the job accurately, so the Commissioners' feedback is needed.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to accept the Communications Supervisor job description, and for the other job descriptions to be tabled for two weeks.** Discussion: In the future, only the County logo should be on postings and job descriptions, not department logos. A footer should be included with the origination date and any revision dates. Acronyms should be spelled out first with the acronym following. The word "may" is ambiguous. Weight to be picked up should be at least 20 lbs. **Unanimous.**

3. Commissioner Liaison Program: Department heads need to know who they report to, and exactly what is expected. In cases where the department head reports to all three Commissioners as supervisors, this needs to be very clear.

4. 2024 and 2025 pay scales were submitted to the Commissioners. The pay checks written on January 2, 2025 are for the 2025 W-2 even though some hours worked were in 2024 and paid at the 2024 wage scale. W-2's can be paper copies or employees can opt to print their own from the payroll website. iSolved gave a breakdown of how the boxes are filled out.

5. The Employee Handbook needs to be updated and she requested that Office Associate L. Clark be on that committee.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to allow Office Associate Liza Clark to assist the H.R. Director on the updating of the Employee Handbook.** Discussion: A. McLaggan asked if the liaison would be working with H.R. on choosing an ad hoc committee. B. Johnson will sit down with her to come up with a committee, reach out to people, and when it comes into the final draft, have an employment attorney review it. **Unanimous.**

6. A vote is needed to approve year 2025 clothing allowance for the Sheriff, Chief Deputy, Detention Manager, Jail Administrator, and Garden Manager. The amount needs to be \$950.00 in the handbook because it still says \$850.00, and the union contract increased it to \$950.00. It is \$425.00 for the part-time Garden Manager position.

****T. Parker moved to continue in 2025 with the same cost for clothing allowance as 2024 for non-union law enforcement staff of \$850.00. T. Parker retracted that motion.**

****T. Parker moved to mimic the 2024's staff of Sheriff, Jail Administrator, Detention Manager and to mimic the \$950.00 and to pay \$425.00 per year for the Garden Manager. K. Kelley made the friendly edit to eliminate the figures from the Employee Handbook in the future. T. Parker accepted the edit.** Discussion that these should be two separate votes. **K. Kelley withdrew his friendly edit and T. Parker withdrew accepting it. The motion was withdrawn.**

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded for the non-union law enforcement personnel listed in 2024 to receive the clothing allowance of \$950.00. Unanimous.**

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to remove these figures from the Employee Handbook in the future. Unanimous.**

A. McLaggan requested the list of employees receiving the clothing allowance so that she can process it in payroll.

7. The Health plan paid \$76,426.53 for week of January 14, 2025. So noted.

8. A. McLaggan requested direction on the Treasurer's pay scale regarding whether there a COLA or if this is this a stipend position of \$2,500.00 per year.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to table the COLA discussion on the Treasurer's position until the 2026 budget season. Unanimous.**

8. A. McLaggan requested an executive session regarding phase two of the Paid Family Medical Leave law for discussion on whether the Commissioners want to go to a private plan and remove the DOL from managing the plan. The Commissioners requested more information. A. McLaggan will schedule this for one hour the on second February Court session with the representative present.

9. Former Commissioner Fowler was named on the Mission Square 457 Plan, and a Commissioner's name is required to process this. Currently H.R. and Finance Directors are on it but

the Finance Director doesn't do anything with it so there should be a meeting with the representative to learn who is supposed to do what. K. Kelley volunteered to meet with the representative.

****T. Parker moved, B. Johnson seconded for Kevin Kelley to collaborate with H.R. to obtain further information on the Mission Square 457B Plan. Unanimous.**

10. A. McLaggan requested an executive session later in the court session. The Commissioners agreed and K. Kelley invited A. McLaggan to attend the first executive session already scheduled.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

IT Director J-sun Bailey reported that he didn't have much to go over and asked if there were any questions. The Commissioners thanked him for arranging for Facilities to install outlets at their seats.

LEGISLATIVE BILL PRESENTATION

Northport Administrator James Kossuth asked the Commissioners to support a bill that expands who can serve on the Waldo County Budget Committee. Currently it must be Municipal Officers. Other people in town would like to serve. Each of 16 counties has its own budget statutes. Waldo County and Cumberland County are the only counties that require municipal officers. The others have broader eligibility. Some allow municipal officials, or managers or clerks and some from public. The request is for this to include anyone over 18. Northport doesn't have a specific request other than that the Commissioners work with Senator Curry to put something forward, and he will talk with the Commissioners about the precise board. There was brief discussion of various types of committees. The Commissioners will consider this, revisit it in 4 weeks, and thanked J. Kossuth for presenting it.

FACILITIES REPORT

Facilities Manager C. Bryant requested to meet with the two new Commissioners today as he wasn't able to attend the first January meeting. The Commissioners thanked C. Bryant, R. Melanson and J. Bailey for the new outlets at their seats. C. Bryant reported that the five propane generators and one diesel generator are full and ready operate as needed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

CLERK'S REPORT

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported the following:

1. Commissioner's Court Sessions are scheduled on June 19, 2025 and December 26, 2025 which are holidays and will need to be discussed.

2. The tax abatement appeal hearing requested by Brooks resident Duke Simoneau needs to be scheduled. The Commissioners scheduled it for February 20, 2025 and the County Clerk was directed to obtain legal representation for the County.

****T. Parker moved, K. Kelley seconded to reach out to the preferred attorney for legal representation in the tax abatement appeal hearing for Duke Simoneau. Unanimous.**

3. Elected Officials Webinar training is being offered by Maine Municipal Association. K. Kelley, Treasurer O. Smith, and B. Arseneau are registered. B. Arseneau recommended that Office Associate Liza Clark be registered to enhance her knowledge. The Commissioners approved this. T. Parker will also be registered.

4. The Commissioners provided best telephone numbers to reach them in the event of inclement weather remote workdays.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commissioners received draft minutes from the January 7, 2025 court session by email.

****K. Kelley moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve minutes from the January 7, 2025 court session as presented. T. Parker abstained as he was absent. Passed by two.**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

B. Johnson reported that she and K. Kelley attended the Maine County Commissioners Association Risk Pool meeting that week and K. Kelley was elected vice-chair for the Risk Pool. Both also attended the Elected Officials training that followed the meeting. B. Johnson serves on Coastal County Workforce, has been secretary/treasurer on this committee for years, and was also elected to the State Workforce Committee. She recommended that both Commissioners Kelley and Parker look into Eastern Maine Development Corporation and Kennebec Valley Council of Governments (KVCOG). She also serves on Midcoast Council of Governments (MCCOG).

She recommended both Commissioners do liaison work in person if at all possible.

A special court session will be scheduled for January 23, 2025 starting at 9:00 a.m. Executive Session for H.R. and Finance processes to be discussed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to go into executive session at 11:29 a.m. for discussion of duties as permitted by MRSA Title 1§401(6)(A). Unanimous.**

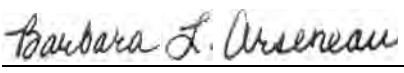
The Commissioners came back into regular session at 12:01 p.m. No action was taken.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****K. Kelley moved, T. Parker seconded to go into executive session at 12:02 p.m. for discussion of personnel matters as permitted by MRSA Title 1§401(6)(A).**

The Commissioner came back into regular session at 1:50 p.m.

****B. Johnson moved, T. Parker seconded to adjourn at 1:50 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by  Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau