

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
MAY 2, 2024**

PRESENT: Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman), Amy R. Fowler, and Betty I. Johnson. Also present was County Clerk Barbara Arseneau to take minutes.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

K. Hunt presented Register of Probate Sharon Peavey's question about a recent travel cost that went over by \$3.01. S. Peavey suggested that she reduce her mileage request by \$3.01. The Commissioners recommended that S. Peavey pay the \$3.01, that K. Hunt track it, and noted that S. Peavey has always been a conservative and careful department head. Since the new travel policy was recently implemented, they felt exceptions couldn't be made so best to pay it back and have a paper trail.

S. Peavey reached her 40th anniversary of working with the County on April 30, 2024. The Commissioners congratulated her and thanked her for her years of service to the County.

Finance Director Kari Hunt submitted the monthly County and Jail appropriations reports, reserve accounts report, and the OPIOID funds update. She also reported the following:

1. She met with the other staff in the office to go over updates and changes in the budget process. She's sent it out and once finalized, will go over it with the Commissioners.
2. She is researching finance software and has met with one company for a demonstration. They offer a 3-year contract and because there is no demo site for potential clients to try out, they will come back with a more customized demo. No numbers have been discussed. She is setting up a demo with another company, as well.
3. Audit: K. Hunt has reached out to 20 to 30 auditors, received a quote from one, and spoken with two others. She's been told that it will cost more than the previous audits. The County's current auditor couldn't say when he thought he'd be able to start. K. Hunt requested more time so she could produce more than one quote to the Commissioners. The ARPA audit alone is \$5,000.00 per year, and since it hasn't been done in 3 years, it will be a minimum of \$15,000.00 and could be paid from the ARPA funds. D. Rowley recently discussed other compliance requirements, so she believes the ARPA audits must continue to be separate. The regular County Annual Audit would be about \$13,500.00 per year, and there are only enough funds to do one this year. D. Rowley said he thought catching up on audits might meet criteria to be paid with ARPA funds.
4. After a small financial scare, which resolved itself, the bank mentioned "Positive Pay". The County would give the bank the County's check range, and if they see a check out of that range, they will notify her. This will help with security and potential fraud, many banks use it, and she'll provide more information when she has it.

5. K. Hunt has found a few checks over a year old that haven't cleared. She's not aware of any uncashed check policy. The Commissioners authorized K. Hunt to cancel them out, authorized printing "Void after 90 days" on County checks and requested that she draft a check-return policy.
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize K. Hunt to print "Void after 90 Days" on the County checks and to draft a check return policy. Unanimous.**

6. Judicial Office Space Lease: The lease for the District Attorney's Office is roughly \$4,280.00 per year. It was discovered that no invoices have been sent, and no payments were made in 2023. The DA's Office and K. Hunt reached out to the State. Last week the State sent a gentleman to deal specifically with this matter and he brought an MOU to sign for a system for payment. It is a 10-year lease. The MOU does not alter the verbiage of the lease but does spell out the lease payment system.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve the MOU for the Judicial Courthouse Lease. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept and file the Financial Report. Unanimous.**

B. Johnson requested that the twice-per-month appropriations printouts be reduced to once per month.

7. The County Checking Account balance is \$203,363.27 balance, 34% of the County budget has been spent and could be 42%.

8. The Jail Checking Account balance is \$149,051.30, 35% of the Jail budget has been spent, and could be 42%.

9. The Health Insurance Fund is down to \$50,000.00 so funds will be transferred from both County and Jail to the health insurance fund. W. Shorey said that funds received from the City of Belfast for the sale of the building could help with this. K. Hunt stated that some of those funds have already been allocated; \$80,000.00 for Severance and \$100,000.00 for Health Insurance Plan.

K. Hunt stated that the ARPA fund interest can be kept by the County, and she will move that interest to the Health Insurance Fund.

She asked if the Commissioners would consider moving to a fiscal year to avoid a Tax Anticipation Note to avoid going so many months without income. The Commissioners said they've discussed this for many years, budgets were kept low for years, and when they requested additional funds, the Budget Committee reduced those.

WARRANTS

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the May 2, 2024 MCRRC/Corrections Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant in the amount of \$53,046.66 with the April 25, 2024 payroll of \$49,233.39 for a total of \$102,280.05. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the May 2, 2024 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve accounts payable in the amount of \$155,526.08 and April 25, 2024 payroll of \$182,185.35 for a total \$337,711.43. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

H.R. Director Annette McLaggan reported the following:

1. Facilities Manager Christopher Bryant completed one year as Facilities Manager on May 1, 2024, with a salary increase from \$54,243.80 to \$54,786.47 per year. Noted.
2. Dispatcher David Kreutchic completed 2 years of employment at the Communications Center retroactive to January 17, 2024 with a pay increase from \$21.80 to \$22.54 per hour. Noted.
3. Corrections Officer Beau Seekins was promoted from Corrections Officer to Corporal April 21, 2024 at the rate of \$27.92. Unanimous.
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the promotion of Beau Seekins from Corrections Officer to Corporal effective April 21, 2024 at the rate of \$27.92 per hour. Unanimous.**
4. For 2024, the Garden Director position will receive \$150.00 per day, three days a week starting April 28, 2024. Commissioner Shorey is the acting Garden Director.
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to start the Garden Director pay effective April 28, 2024. Unanimous.**
5. The Communications Center Director has submitted performance evaluations for all their employees.
6. Insurance Administrator M. Ulmer requested a vote to accept the COBRA rates for 2024 as follows:
 1. Single: \$1,486 Medical / Rx and \$4 Vision for Combined Total of \$1,490.
 2. Participant and Child(ren): \$2,378 Medical / Rx and \$6 Vision for Combined Total of \$2,384.
 3. Participant and Spouse / DP: \$2,675 Medical / Rx and \$7 Vision for Combined Total of \$2,682.
 4. Family \$3,715 Medical / Rx and \$9 Vision for Combined Total of \$3,724.****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson to accept the recommended COBRA rates for 2024, with the numbers to be provided to employees by A. McLaggan. Unanimous.**
7. Some employees have inquired about the wellness reimbursement of \$75.00. Last year \$4,000.00 was used on the wellness program. It started May 1, 2023 through November 2023. The Commissioners discussed the previous year, noting that when the health insurance fund was healthy, the County implemented various wellness programs, including the \$50.00 wellness reimbursement which was increased to \$75.00 this past year, a \$100.00 Hannaford gift card and a \$100.00 Reny's gift card given out to each employee. Gym reimbursements were briefly discussed and in 2023 only one employee had submitted for that. The Commissioners stated they felt that the wellness perks were not helping.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to suspend any wellness program reimbursements. Unanimous.**

8. Maine Paid Family Medical Leave must be paid starting in 2025. It will be 1% of the wage budget and is estimated at \$75,000.00. K. Hunt recommended funding this in the 2025 Employee Benefits Budget. Any employee can request a medical leave. If they qualify, they can be out of work for up to 12 weeks. The employer can have the employees pay half of the 1% and it would cost about \$175.00 per year per Waldo County employee. The funds go to the State. EMA Director Dale Rowley said that if there is an overage, the State will have to pay that. A. McLaggan asked the Commissioners to consider if the employees will pay for half of the 1% or the County will. Elected officials may not have to pay because they don't use sick leave. She will bring up more details as they become available.

9. The grievance meeting for the Sign on Bonus is May 16, 2024 at 11:00 a.m.

FACILITIES REPORT

Facilities Manager Christopher Bryant reported the following:

1. The Old Superior Courthouse has been fully emptied, keys to the building have been collected, and he has notified the City of Belfast
2. He has been creating a list of Facilities projects.

EMA EMERGENCY PLANS

EMA Director Dale Rowley submitted the following updated plans for approval:

- Emergency Operations Plan
- Continuity of Operations in Government Plan
- Integrated Public Alert and Warning system (IPAWS) Standard Operating Procedures Guide May 2024.

***A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve the updated plans as presented.
Unanimous.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Present was Winterport Councilor Kevin Kelley. There was brief discussion about the Jail history. There are 11 residents in the Reentry now. If the Reentry Center goes away, it will take at least a year to prepare to pay another million dollars to house inmates.

K. Kelley said the wild card is Penobscot County because they don't know where the new Jail will be. He sees that as more of a long-term issue. If they pull out of Two Bridges, the bill will go up even higher for inmates. Penobscot's budget must be ready for the voters by January. Even if the voters approve it, it will be four years before a Jail is built. The goal was for all the jails to help each other. There are not many places to board inmates anymore. The price will go up, and there needs to be a "Plan B."

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau presented the following:

1. Selling Superior Courthouse: B. Arseneau has worked with the attorney, has obtained signatures and dates, and Finance Director Kari Hunt notarized the documents.

2. B. Arseneau extended special thanks to Facilities Manager Chris Bryant and Facilities Tech Rodney Melanson for their careful and organized work moving the records from the Superior Courthouse to the EMA Warehouse. She also thanked Custodian Dartagnan Gray for helping her carry records out of the building into her vehicle.

3. Facilities Technician Rodney Melanson dealt with and arranged for Thayer to come fix a pipe that was leaking in the ceiling in her office last week. She appreciated the quick response.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Commissioners received draft April 22, 2024 Waldo County Commissioners Court minutes.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the minutes from the April 22, 2024 Waldo County Commissioners Court Session. Unanimous.**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. W. Shorey reported that he spoke with Communications Director Mike Larrivee today, who said that he was notified by a phone call from Knox that they wished to take back their 911 calls. W. Shorey said that there is a contract in place and a phone call wasn't the way to handle this. It requires someone with authority at Knox to send a signed paper stating the date and time the contract will become void. Until the Commissioners receive a written document from the Knox County Commissioners stating the specific date the contract will end, it's still valid with payment expected.

2. M. Larrivee has reported that Knox County wants to come in during the May 16, 2024 court session to thank Waldo County and the Dispatch Center for taking their 911 calls.

3. W. Shorey said that he spoke with Garden Manager Dale Cross and told him the garden needs to be seeded later this year and not planted until June 15, 2024, and he will only be able to count on up to six (6) residents from the Reentry Center to be available to help with the Garden.

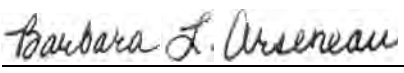
EXECUTIVE SESSION

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 11:11a.m. for discussion of non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(F). Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to come out of executive session at 12:15 p.m. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to deny the lapsed time request. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn at 12:16 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted by  Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau