

STATE OF MAINE
COUNTY OF WALDO
COURT OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS



District

- 1 Breanna Pinkham Bebb (207) 323-1226
- 2 Kevin J. Kelley (207) 306-9225
- 3 Timothy A. Parker (207) 306-9232

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Treasurer
Owen R. Smith

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION

JULY 16, 2026

9:00 a.m.

PRESENT: Commissioners Kevin Kelley (Chair), and Breanna Pinkham Bebb, Timothy Parker. Staff present were Treasurer Owen Smith, Human Resources Director Tracy Benton, Finance Director Kari Hunt, County Clerk Barbara Arseneau, and Office Associate Danielle Murray.

Welcome / Call to Order: Commissioner Kelley called the session to order at 9:00 a.m.

Rollcall / Attendance: Commissioners Kelley, Pinkham Bebb and Commissioner Parker were present

Review / Revise / Approval of Agenda

K. Kelley added Opioid before public comment.

****Motion: K. Kelley/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve the changes to the agenda as stated. Passed unanimously.**

Consent Agenda

Finance Report

Minutes: July 2, 2026 caucus – Tabled for edits.

Discussion T. Parker asked if there is written documentation stating that write-ins are not allowed on the ballots because he is receiving pushback. County Clerk B. Arseneau explained that the information is not in writing but came from K. Kelley following discussion with an attorney. K. Kelley stated that he would obtain the guidance in writing.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to approve the consent agenda with the Finance report, tabled the July 2, 2026 Caucus minutes for edits.**

Later in the session County Clerk B. Arseneau resubmitted the edited July 2, 2026 Caucus minutes, the commissioners made 2 more corrections and then voted as follows.

****Motion: K. Kelley/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve the July 2, 2026 Caucus minutes with edits. Passes unanimously.**

Opioid: K. Kelley stated that he has a draft of the R3 contract and requested that it be tabled until a legal opinion can be obtained. He said he wants to ensure the County is properly authorizing the expenditure of more than \$212,000.00 in opioid settlement funds to the awardees and that all legal requirements regarding the disbursement are adequately addressed. The cost of the legal opinion will be paid from the opioid settlement funds.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to get a legal opinion on the R3 draft contract and that the legal fee will be withdrawn from the opioid funds account. Passed unanimously.**

Public Comment - (3 minutes per participant) None

Department Reports/Requests

Finance – Presented by Finance Director Kari Hunt

Miscellaneous:

2 Tabled Items from 7/2/26

K. Hunt discussed the appropriate funding sources for sick and vacation leave buyouts, how to budget for bereavement leave, and expanded the discussion to include compensatory (comp) time. There was some discussion about how to budget for comp time. It was tabled for further review.

K. Kelley expressed concern about moving expenses in the budget again, stating he had hoped last year's changes would be a one-time adjustment. He was concerned additional changes could confuse the Budget Committee and require another educational process, and felt the discussion warranted further consideration.

B. Pinkham Bebb stated her primary concern was employee buyouts. She noted that department heads estimate potential retirements or departures, but being over or under by one employee can significantly impact a department's budget. She felt these less predictable expenses are better suited for the Severance Reserve Account. She noted bereavement costs are smaller, while vacation and sick leave buyouts can create larger budget fluctuations. T. Parker noted that exceeding the budget one year does not necessarily mean the department will exceed it the following year.

K. Kelley stated that approximately nine employees are expected to retire or leave. K. Hunt stated that \$50,000 had been added for sign-on bonuses. The Commissioners briefly discussed options for budgeting severance, including using employee turnover trends and other available funding sources. B. Pinkham Bebb felt department heads should determine their severance needs, but the costs should not be included in individual department budgets. K. Hunt confirmed that reimbursement funds are deposited into the Severance Account.

K. Hunt advised there is no additional update on the 2024 audit, but according to the auditor, it should be completed by the end of September. The County's 2021, 2022, and 2023 audits are currently available on the County website and are also linked on the State Auditor's website.

7.1.2. Warrants:

OPIOID Warrant 07/16/2026

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to approve payment of the July 16, 2026, OPIOID Settlement Fund in the amount of \$0.00. Passed unanimously.**

MCRCC (Jail) Warrant 07/16/2026

****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to approve payment of the July 16, 2026, MCRCC accounts payable and reserve warrant in the amount of \$78,242.52 and July 16, 2026, payroll in the amount of \$59,231.72 for a total of \$137,474.24. Passed unanimously.**

County Warrant 07/16/2026

****Motion: B. Pinkham Bebb/T. Parker to approve payment of the July 16, 2026, County accounts payable and reserve warrant in the amount of \$398,345.92 and July 16, 2026, payroll in the amount of \$191,657.56 for a total of \$590,003.48. Passed unanimously.**

T. Parker: inquired about the cost of hiring someone with no experience? And requested that the funds be earmarked for that purpose. He noted that it is less expensive to hire someone who has already completed the academy than to pay them while they attend the academy, and it also serves as an incentive for the County.

FACILITIES REPORT - Presented by Facilities Director Christopher Bryant

Update on projects:

Facilities Manager Chris Bryant reported that grinding of the tree stumps is scheduled for August 6th. He also expects to receive a call any day regarding the roofing project, which is anticipated to be completed in one day. After the roofing project is completed, C. Bryant will begin replacing the clapboards in the courtyard, which will extend approximately 4 rows up. C. Bryant would like to complete the shed project and possibly the fence as well. K. Kelley and T. Parker did not want a vinyl fence as vinyl can crack and split.

C. Bryant reported that he will be painting the parking lot lines at the Public Safety complex, including the Sheriff's Office, Dispatch, and beside the Jail. He already has the paint and striping machine.

C. Bryant advised that he has been researching options for a flagpole for the Probate Building, noting that flagpoles are expensive, with a spruce flagpole costing approximately \$7,000.00 and a fiberglass flagpole costing approximately \$3,300.00. He is unsure of the best location for placement but suggested one option would be to place the flag on the side of the building, with he and the Facilities Technician adding flag maintenance to their daily tasks. T. Parker liked the idea from a cost perspective, and stated he would prefer a metal flagpole. C. Bryant said that if the County moves forward with the project, he prefers either a fiberglass or metal flagpole but remains unsure of the best location. K.

Kelley suggested tabling the discussion for a couple of weeks to allow the Commissioners to walk around the building, determine the best location, and obtain additional quotes. He understood both sides of the discussion and stated that he would prefer a metal pole with a galvanized finish. C. Bryant offered to walk around the building with the Commissioners to help determine the best location for the flagpole.

T. Parker asked how the deck at the Cooperative Extension building was coming. C. Bryant reported it's been completed.

Over-budget lines:

Probate Building: Heating repairs for the Probate Building were originally budgeted at \$1,200.00. The total amount spent was \$7,726.00. The burning mesh inside the boiler had failed, and the other boiler was also inspected. Parts and labor from Thayer, LLC totaled \$6,772.56. The heating issue occurred in January/February, as he recalled. A few weeks ago, the water heater developed a leak, and C. Bryant utilized a plumber for the repair.

EMA: The filtration system was clogged with iron and sediment, requiring repairs, which was \$1,400.00.

Jail: The boiler developed a gas leak, and the water heater required repairs in January. The total cost was \$3,525.00, including the water heater cost of \$2,884.00. C. Bryant used Thayer, LLC due to the existing service contract with them. The air conditioning blower motor also failed. The unit is older, dating back to the 1980's. C. Bryant responded on a Saturday after learning that the Jail had a smoke odor. Repairs included \$1,982.00 in labor and \$1,500.00 in materials. K. Kelley asked how old the air conditioning were at the Jail. C. Bryant said that the units date back to the 1980's, although the condenser is newer than the original system. K. Kelley asked whether the cost of repairs to the air conditioning units was being tracked. C. Bryant stated that many of the building's systems are very old. K. Kelley suggested tracking repair costs and, once they reach approximately 60% of the replacement cost, replacement of the equipment should be considered. C. Bryant also noted that some rooms in the Jail are supplemented with heat pumps.

K. Kelley stated that SMRT Architects & Engineers completed a building assessment, which included several recommendations, and K. Kelley suggested obtaining the report from the Chief Deputy so the recommendations could be reviewed. He noted that the SMRT report was completed in November or December. T. Parker asked whether there were any leaks in the Jail roof, and C. Bryant advised that there were none.

T. Parker asked when the water was last tested and whether C. Bryant could determine the cost of asbestos testing between the old Sheriff's Office and the County building. C. Bryant stated that he would look into it.

Communications Report – Presented by Director Michael Larrivee

I Am Responding 2027 contract and pricing: M. Larrivee proposed a five-year contract to assist with 2027 budget planning based on call volume. He explained that when a fire department is paged out, notifications are sent directly to their phones, and the expense is paid from the department's budget. B. Pinkham Bebb noted that the current budgeted amount is \$13,657.00 with a proposed increase to \$16,151.00, an increase of approximately \$4,000.00. M. Larrivee explained that the contract includes a flat fee plus a per-call fee, with an average increase of 26% over the five-year term. B. Pinkham Bebb asked whether there was an alternative to the software, and M. Larrivee advised that Motorola does offer a solution, but it is not a total solution as they are in the process of developing it. B. Pinkham Bebb and T. Parker questioned whether a five-year contract was necessary. T. Parker asked if there is a penalty for ending the contract early if the County moved forward with the agreement. M. Larrivee was unsure but there is time to review options before the contract starts in March 2027. B. Pinkham Bebb stated that, given the cost, the County should consider only a one or two-year commitment. The Commissioners tabled further discussion until M. Larrivee presents answers to these questions during the August 20, 2026 Commissioners' Meeting.

911 Sit/Stand Desks: M. Larrivee reported that the old sit/stand stations have been cleaned annually, and the annual cleaning for all four consoles by the company they were purchased from is \$1,900.00. The cost to replace them is approximately \$300,000.00, and the company offers a full warranty for the life of the furniture, estimated at 15–20 years, if the annual cleanings continue. No contract is required if the County continues to pay for the annual cleanings. In the past, the company has had to replace lift mechanisms at approximately the five-year mark. T. Parker stated that, based on ergonomics training, having good, functional furniture is beneficial. M. Larrivee stated they he would have them start later this year and would find it in one of his lines for the 2026.

M. Larrivee: A new hire will start on 7/21/2026 and has successfully completed the background check.

B. Pinkham Bebb stated that she is receiving multiple emails regarding the Education Surplus Zoom meetings explaining how the process works. M. Larrivee said he has not received any information or set anything up yet. She asked him to please look into this.

Human Resources Director T. Benton and Director of Communications M. Larrivee jointly recognized Paige Morgridge from the Communications Center. P. Morgridge has completed the SAA class certification, passed certification “with flying colors,” and has become an expert on the CAD system. J. Bailey, P. Morgridge, and M. Larrivee are currently the only ones who have this certification in Waldo County. T. Parker expressed his pride and recognized the “passing of the torch” from Treasurer Owen Smith to Communications Director M. Larrivee.

County Clerk Report – Presented by Clerk Barbara Arseneau

B. Arseneau asked if the Commissioners wished to continue the one-year, paper-only subscription to the Midcoast Villager at a cost of \$118.00. B. Pinkham Bebb noted that she has a personal subscription and is willing to print articles if needed. T. Parker stated that he does not care for the publication but feels it is important for the County to remain subscribed. B. Arseneau asked whether there was another publication that should be considered; none was suggested. K. Hunt advised that she reads the articles and noted that the County retains County-related articles from it. B. Pinkham Bebb requested that the Villager print a correction to the March 6, 2026, edition regarding the article “County in Transition,” which stated that T. Parker and K. Kelley were elected in November 2025; however, they were elected in November 2024.

****Motion: B. Pinkham Bebb/T. Parker that the Commissioners’ Office continue the subscription to the Midcoast Villager. Passed by two; K. Kelley abstained.**

Incident After Action Report (IAAR) Robbins Lumber Mill Fire Incident was provided to the commissioners.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to accept the After Action Report Robbins Lumber Incident. Passed unanimously.**

The County Clerk presented the Commissioners with a study she recently conducted of County Commissioners’ pay scale and benefit information; no action was required. B. Pinkham Bebb and K. Kelley requested that the information be emailed to them. T. Parker noted that Waldo County is the only county that does not have a County administrator.

Commissioners’ Schedule for reviewing 2027 Budget Requests:

8/6/2026 at 8:00 a.m.: Emergency Management Agency, District Attorney’s Office, Registry of Deeds and Registry of Probate requests.

8/13/2026 at 4:00 p.m.: Information Technology, Comm. Center, University of Maine Co-Operative Extension, Waldo County Soil & Water Conservation District, Special Appropriations, Finance Office, and Commissioners. T. Parker confirmed availability for this date.

8/15 9:00 a.m.: Facilities Management, Sheriff’s Office, and Jail; hopefully to be done by 1:00 p.m.

Human Resources’ presentation date is still undetermined but needs to be completed by 8/20/2026.

Maine County Commissioners Association Annual Convention attendee registration was discussed. K. Kelley stated that he plans to attend but would defer his attendance if there are not enough funds available for the other Commissioners to attend. The conference is scheduled for September 23–25 at Sunday River, and registration and rooming arrangements must be made by August 23, 2026. County Clerk B. Arseneau expressed interest in attending one or two days if possible as the Clerks, Managers, and Administrators’ Association will also be holding their meeting there. T. Parker asked about the amount available in the budget line for the conference. It was noted that \$1,000 is budgeted for lodging this year. T. Parker stated that he would defer to Commissioner B. Pinkham Bebb and County Clerk B. Arseneau regarding attendance.

Commissioners’ Old Business

Waldo County Bicentennial Planning – K. Kelley requested that a list be presented at the next Commissioners’ Court session on August 6 for review and discussion. The Commissioners will determine which items to move forward with. T. Parker will provide the County Clerk the phone number for Karen Kelley, who is with the Searsport Historical Society.

Chair K. Kelley called for a 5-minute recess at 10:20 a.m.
The meeting reconvened at 10:25 a.m.

Commissioners' New Business (as needed)

T. Parker stated that the Commissioners need to have a more in-depth conversation regarding the future, and the expiration date of the jail. He noted that while maintenance is often discussed, the biggest cost drivers are employees and the building itself. K. Kelley agreed that discussion is needed and will send the SMRT report to the Commissioners for review of the recommendations provided. The item should remain on the agenda.

Human Resources Report – Presented by Human Resource Director Tracey Benton

Pay Step Increases to be noted:

Hiring notice for patrol: T. Benton presented Melinda Sanderson for hire. There is a Basic Law Enforcement Training Program (BLETP) reimbursement of \$40,221.00 for this hire. M. Sanderson has a tentative start date of July 28, 2026, and is an employee coming from the City of Belfast. T. Parker asked whether this was a request for approval, and T. Benton confirmed that it was, noting that the BLETP expense is not included in the Sheriff's budget. K. Hunt advised this would bring the Severance Account balance down to \$32,000. T. Parker stated that he personally felt the expense should be paid from reserves and designated as an unbudgeted expense for the Budget Committee's review.

K. Kelley asked for an update on the unbudgeted expense spreadsheet. K. Hunt advised that the current total is \$118,000. B. Pinkham Bebb stated that the expense has a designated account it should come from and would prefer using that account rather than making budget adjustments.

****Motion: K. Kelley/T. Parker to approve hiring Melinda Sanderson with the BLEPT reimbursement requirement.**

Discussion: T. Parker is in favor of hiring, not the payment solution. Passed unanimously.

Tabled Items from 07/02/26 meeting: T. Benton distributed the Elected Officials' Pay Scale, which includes the Treasurer and Commissioners. The pay scales for each elected official were provided for review and will be brought forward for a vote at the next Commissioners' Court session on August 6, 2026.

Miscellaneous:

Four new job descriptions were distributed for review and edits: Deputy Register of Deeds, Register of Deeds, Probate Administrative Assistant (Class VI), and Deputy Register of Probate (Class VIII). The job descriptions were tabled until the August 6, 2026 Commissioners' Court session for an approval vote.

The Safety and Health Policy was also distributed for review, edits, and suggestions. The policy was tabled until the August 6, 2026, Commissioners' Court session for an approval vote and, once approved, will be added to the new Employee Handbook currently in progress.

****Motion: T. Parker/B. Pinkham Bebb to go into Executive Session at 10:36 a.m. for Duties/Compensation pursuant to M.R.S. 1§405 6(A) Unanimous.**

Commissioners reconvened 11:02 a.m.

Adjournment: **Motion: K. Kelley /T. Parker 11:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by

 Waldo County Office Associate
Danielle Murray