

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – April 10, 2024 – 2:00 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, April 10, 2024, at 2:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Edward B. Glaser, Commissioner District #1, Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2 and Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: Sheriff Patrick Polky, Interim County Administrator Gordon Page, IT Director Zach Greene, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Administrative Assistant to the Airport Manager Elizabeth Carver, EMA Director Candice Richards, Maintenance Jim Hagan, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Chief Deputy Curt Andrick.

Others: Camden Resident Peter Lindquist

Regular Meeting – Agenda Tuesday – April 10, 2024 – 2:00 P.M.

Town Hall Streams:

https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=50&id=59355

2:00 Meeting Called to Order

2:01 Presentation

1. Employee Recognition.

I. 2:05 Public Comment - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.

7. 2:06 Consent Items

1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:
 - i. Agenda - Non-Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
 - ii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of March 12, 2024.
 - iii. Department Reports.
 - iv. Warrants.
 - v. Reserve Withdrawals.

2:07 Action Items

1. Act to Approve and Authorize to Adopt the 2024 TAN Resolutions.
2. Act to Approve the Updated Job Description for the Administrative Assistant to the Airport Manager.
3. Act to Approve an Updated Per-Diem Policy.
4. Act to Call for Nominations to Appoint/Reappoint Four (4) Seats on the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC) and Approve the Nomination/Appointment Timetable and Press Release.

I. 2:12 Discussion Items

1. Discussion of County Property Identified for Potential Sale
2. Staffing Discussion

II. Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Glaser called the Regular Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:01 P.M.

II. Presentation – Employee Recognition

III. Public Comment - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.

Rockland Fire Chief Whytock – Wanted to comment on letter from City of Rockland and last month's meeting. The County approached the City around November - December in six different meetings whether they were formal or informal to inquire if the City was willing to take over the Dispatch center. The request was made to the City. We know it's a headache, we know it's been a problem. The city didn't come to the County to take on another problem. We only offered up our services after being asked multiple times. The first couple of meetings we had no interest in taking that headache on. We finally decided it was in the best interest of the County and of the emergency services that the City would step up and offer to fill that void. The last meeting, we had with the Interim County Administrator and Commissioner Glaser they asked for a letter. I believe the intent of the letter was so that it could be officially be talked about in public, and decisions and guidance could be made. I didn't watch the meeting until 3-4 days after, but started receiving phone calls. I think myself and a handful of others, the City kind of got thrown to the side at the request of the County to provide that letter. I don't think it was fair, I don't think it was right, but that's the direction it went in. Again, we were asked to provide a letter, we were asked if we'd be willing to step in. That's what brought the City to the table. I don't know if we'd be willing to take on that burden now given the climate. That is something that can be talked about later. One of the discussions last month was that the County has hit all the bench marks either on time or ahead of time in order to get the PSAP back in service. Outside of staffing I'm not sure what we've done to meet those benchmarks, but I would love to hear what those benchmarks are. I think those benchmarks should be clearly stated because if they've been met on the User side of things then we certainly haven't seen any improvement in our service. I am also curious as to what the other Action Items are that are going to keep us out of the same position that we are in right now, or that we found ourselves in 7 months ago. We have heard about contracts and discussed that the County has contracts that are (inaudible) and I think we all agree that's what should happen. Keep in mind to that the Towns get to decide if people forget those contracts are for the Towns, and the contracts are for a contracted service. I think to go outside of the County would be a drastic move, but the County also dealt with a drastic contract issue a few weeks ago with Solar panels. I think drastic steps might need to be taken. To that end, the City has been in talks with Waldo County about having Waldo County do our 911 coverage for us. The City would hire their own Dispatchers and migrate away for the County structure. I don't think that's in the best interest of the County. I think it will throw another line in the divide between Emergency services and everything else we have going on. The City is preparing for that end result if we have to. Other Towns have also reached out to us to come on board. I am worried that if our hand is forced and we have to take that step, then everybody else is going to fail because of that. I personally, and professionally, don't want to see that happen. We want this to succeed. We want the County to succeed. We just want everyone to see where we are coming from. If we do move that way, I think others will follow.

Commissioner Pohlman – I haven't been in the meetings. I know that Gordon and Ed have been. I have been kept informed and aware of all the different conversations and all that have been going on. There has been a lot of misunderstanding, misinformation and lot of confusion. We are all trying to get to the same point which is to provide the best 911 service as we can as a County. I think that how we got to this point, it was unfortunate wording in the paper that how Rockland was going to absorb the Dispatch center. This caused a lot of confusion and a lot of upset for the Dispatchers that are working really hard and trying to do the best that they can. I think all that information and comments led us to a point where I hope that we can move forward in a

coordinated and collaborative way to provide services that you, and everyone else wants. Did you receive the letter that went out to each elected official, municipalities and to Jesse & Bob from our Interim County Administrator? It is almost 2 pages. It is quite comprehensive and it details point by point where we are in the process with the Dispatch center, what is coming down the road and it clarifies. The intent of this letter was to get everyone on the same page so that we can all move together with the same informed information.

Rockland Fire Chief Whytock – I thought I had seen this letter. I did not see the points of where we are, where we’re going, all of that.

Interim County Administrator Page – To clarify, this letter Commissioner Pohlman is referring to went to all elected officials of all the municipalities either directly to the Boards of Selectmen or through their Town Manager. Earlier this week I forwarded that to the Chair of the E Board Jesse Thompson and Robert Coombs. I asked the specifically to distribute the letter to all the members of the Users Group so you may not have seen that yet.

Rockland Fire Chief Whytock – I don’t think I’ve seen the whole thing.

Commissioner Pohlman – I wondered. Because some of those points that have been clarified have been laid all out. Tomorrow it sounds like you have an Executive Board Users Group meeting. I don’t know who.....

Interim County Administrator Page – It is my plan to go to that meeting. I may be a few minutes late.

Commissioner Pohlman – Hopefully you would have seen that letter by then. We are anxious to work together with all of our Towns and Municipalities, all the Chiefs and everybody to do everything we can, whether ultimately the services are kept in house or in Rockland we really just want what is best to provide the service to all the citizens. I look forward to working with everybody. We do have people working very hard to bring everything back up to full service in house.

Commissioner Glasser- Thank you for coming in too. I appreciate the amount of work you put into Rockland firefighting what it is. It’s a stellar example of a well-run department. The knowledge that you bring to Communications is also much appreciated, so thank you.

Interim County Administrator Page – Thank you for coming today. With respect to your position as fire chief could you say whether or not you are here as an official representative for the City or are you here as the Fire Chief?

Rockland Fire Chief Whytock – The City Manager knows I am here. We have talked and had discussions about what is going to be said. I certainly am speaking as the City of Rockland’s Fire & EMS Chief, and I am certainly speaking as a member of the User Group and member of the public.

IV. Consent Items

1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:

- i. Agenda - Non-Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
- ii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of March 12, 2024.
- iii. Monthly Department Reports
- iv. Warrants
- v. Reserve Withdrawals

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to approve the consent items 2-5 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

V. Action Items**1. Act to Approve and Authorize to Adopt the 2024 TAN Resolutions.**

The County sent out an RFP for the 2024 TAN to six (6) banks. Bids were due on Friday, March 1st at 2:00 P.M., at which time they were opened. Five (5) banks responded with Machias Savings Bank having the lowest bid at a percentage rate of 4.99%. Administrator Glaser and Kathy Robinson, Finance Director are recommending that the Commission adopt the attached Vote of County Commissioners Authorizing Tax Anticipation Borrowing and award the TAN bid to Machias Savings Bank. James Saffian, Bond Counsel has drafted the attached vote. Copies of the bid results and the form of vote are in the packet. The vote will be place on your desk for the meeting.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve and Authorize to Adopt the 2024 TAN Resolutions and to Award the 2024 TAN Bid to Machias Savings Bank At An Interest Rate of 4.99%. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

2. Act to Approve the Updated Job Description for the Administrative Assistant to the Airport Manager.

The Administrative Assistant to the Airport Manager position was updated to due not being reviewed in 13 years. With the many changes and growth of the Airport, this position needed review to ensure all requirements and responsibilities were met. This approval process went through previous Airport Manager, Jeremy Shaw, Kathy Robinson, Gordon Page, and Amber Christie. The documentation and justification are provided in your packet. The updated job description put this position in line with our other Administrative positions and increased the Grade of the position.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Approve the Updated Job Description for the Administrative Assistant to the Airport Manager. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

3. Act to Approve an Updated Per-Diem Policy.

Knox County per diem policy was updated in August 2023 to help with recruitment of emergency per diem employees. Since then, we have found value in providing 1:1 experience for new hires and would like to implement that into our per diem policy. Per Diem employees help the County with covering vacations, leaves of absence, and staffing shortages. They are a huge asset to the County and we feel better recruitment practices for hiring these types of employees should be updated.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve an Updated Per-Diem Policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

4. Act to Call for Nominations to Fill Four (4) Seats on the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC) and Approve the Nomination/Appointment Timetable and Press Release.

Kate serves in the District #1 seat and was appointed last year to fill a vacancy. She is eligible to serve 3 more full terms and has asked to be reappointed, the Town of South Thomaston also voted to nominate her to be reappointed and no other nominees were received. Jeff serves in the Business seat and was appointed in 2021, after being nominated by the Chamber. He is eligible to serve 2 more full terms and has asked to be reappointed. No other nominees were received. Pete Smith has requested to be appointed to the District #3 seat currently occupied by Dick Witherspoon (Dick has asked to be replaced). Camden also nominated him directly to the

County Commission. No other nominees were received. Bill Bow of Rockport has volunteered for the Environmental Seat which is currently vacant. I reached out to the Conservation Commissions in Knox County asking for them to solicit from their members a nominee. He is the one that bubbled up from those Commissions.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Call for Nominations to Appoint/Reappoint Four (4) Seats on the Airport Pubic Advisory Committee (APAC) to Reappoint Kate Oldakowski (District 1), Reappoint Jeff Northgraves (Business), Appoint William (Bill) Bow (Environmental) and Appoint Pete Smith (District 3). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

5. Act to Authorize the Interim County Administrator to Enter Into a Lease Agreement with Penobscot Island Air and a Lease Agreement.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I agree, we do not want PIA to move somewhere else. Is the coverage that PIA is able to get, is that any more or less than it was previously?
- **Interim Airport Manager Northgraves** – It’s the same. Different ownership. This is two different agreements. One is for the Hangar that they plan to operate out of, the other if for their overall air operations. That was really the one that had the issue. I do agree with Peter Marchesi’s review of it. We are taking a bit of a risk, but we’ve been carrying that risk for years. Both of these leases have had other things in it added and changed. Peter Marchesi is a big risk management type of individual. There are other insurances that are in there that have not been in there before. I am happy that Peter went through this, and that they went through it with us as well.
- **Interim County Administrator Page** – In the minimum standards that the County has for these types of things, there is a clause added in there. The County could at its discretion waive certain requirements. Though the years, they have pretty much cut their own deal.
- **Interim Airport Manager Northgraves** - My recommendation would be to authorize the County Administrator execute and sign the lease for the hangar and the agreement once it’s satisfactory.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – How long will their terms be for?
- **Interim Airport Manager Northgraves** – I think it’s 20 + 20 + 20. That is a typical lease. The FAA considers that long term lease. The FAA has a couple requirements embedded in the lease. One is they have to have a CPI tied to it for the rate change, and also has to have a reclamation clause so that at the end of the lease, we will own them.
- **Interim County Administrator Page** – There is no aggregate on this policy so in essence they could take multiple hits.
- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Authorize the Interim County Administrator to Enter Into a Lease Agreement with Penobscot Island Air and a Lease Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

VI. Discussion Items

1. Discussion of County Property Identified for Potential Sale:

- **Commissioner Glaser** – This goes back to the piece of property at the Airport. We were going to try to get someone to look at that and give us an assessment value.
- **Interim County Administrator Page** – I have not done anything. I think Jeremy was here for that particular meeting, and not sure if he perused it.

- **Commissioner Parent** – Our suggestion would be the new member of the APAC, being an environmental expert, to have him give us solid opinion on whether to offer the property up for sale, or to hang on to it.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – If we can move it ahead, we have to have a valuation done on the property.

2. Staffing Discussion:

- **Chief Deputy Andrick** – Patrol is fully staffed. The Vinalhaven position has been filled. The Deputy started yesterday. In Corrections we need one position filled. We have hired approximately 14 positions since January. We have 2 interviews today, and still have applications coming in. We will have to have a register for when positions become available. The yellow flag law – that is an issue that has come to the front burner. This process is changing due to the legislature.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Will that require another offer to administer that?
- **Chief Deputy Andrick** – It could. The last one kept 2 Deputies off the road dealing with it. The whole process can take hours. For this, we are understaffed.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – If the State requires something like this, they will not fund it, will they?
- **Chief Deputy Andrick** – No. I think it's timely, to finally to have two Deputies on Vinalhaven. If one needs backup, they will have it.
- **Commissioner Parent** – The new position for Deputy on Vinalhaven, does he reside on the island as well?
- **Chief Deputy Andrick** – He will eventually. He's in temporary housing right now. As everyone knows, housing is an issue especially on the island. That second position will be paid for 100% by the Town of Vinalhaven.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – That's great news! It's been a long time coming. Thank you for bringing up the yellow flag process. Perhaps we can have a deeper discussion about this. With all new additions to Corrections, I was at Risk Pool & MCCA meeting today. There is going to be a move to have the Risk Pool do some presentations to Corrections personnel. Regarding the Jail/Corrections, at the moment, the Corrections centers in the state are on line to receive \$4 million in additional funding. Most will be earmarked for MAT training and medically assisted training services. If the Governor vetoes the budget, then that will go away. We are watching that. We talked about making a trip to Corrections to say hi and see how things are going.
- **Commissioner Parent** – Would any of the Deputies on Vinalhaven or North Haven be available to cover an emergency on Isle au Haut?
- **Chief Deputy Andrick** - Yes. We work closely with the Coast Guard and Marine Patrol. We have done research with private companies to get us out to the islands in an emergency situation.
- **Commissioner Parent** – If and when we get the boat, would that be stationed on the island?
- **Chief Deputy Andrick** – We are still in discussions about that. I think we would be looking at keeping the boat in Rockland. We are sending two to training
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – very sincere thank you to Gordon. With all you are doing it is very much appreciated.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – We will be lucky if we find a full time Administrator that woks as much as you do.

VII. Adjourn

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with both in favor.*

The special meeting adjourned at 3:21 P.M

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting
held on May 14, 2024.**