

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Monday – March 16, 2020 – 2:00 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Monday, March 16, 2020, at 2:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Dorothy G. Meriwether, Commissioner District #1 and Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3. *Absent: Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2.*

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Deputy Chief Patrick Polky, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Jail Administrator Ray Porter, Register Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Maintenance Manager Jim Hagan and via teleconference call District Attorney Natasha Irving, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley and HR Laurie Bouchard .

Absent: Mike Dean and Assistant Jail Administrator Kathy Carver

Others in attendance: PenBay Pilot Reporter Chris Wolf, and Village Soup Reporter Steve Betts arrived after the teleconference call.

Special Meeting – Agenda

Monday – March 16, 2020 – 2:00 P.M.

REVISED

- I. 2:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 2:01 Knox County Department Managers’ Meeting**
 - 1. Knox County Commissioners will be in attendance at the CDC Video Conference Call, held at the Knox County Safety Building, EMA Conference Room, 301 Park Street, Rockland, Maine.
- III. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Pohlman called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:00 P.M.

II. Public Comment

Chair, Commissioner Pohlman asked if there was any public comment.
None.

III. Knox County Department Managers’ Meeting

- A teleconference call to the Maine CDC on the COVID-19 emergency was completed. Questions from a variety of entities were asked during the call. Our Department Managers watched and listened to that teleconference call. After the call was over, Management talked a bit about the situation, and they discussed how they would handle operations for the County.
- Communications Director Ray Sisk handed out to all Knox County Department Managers “Pandemic-Specific Continuity of Operations Planning Guide”. Discussion took place on pages 1, 2 & 3.
- Administrator Hart stated we need to talk about how we will be operating the County government as a whole and the individual offices. There are four (4) different facilities that need to be discussed: Courthouse, Airport, Public Safety Building and Jail. The challenging one will be the Courthouse as we have the Court side which is run by the State and the County side which has Finance, Deeds, Probate, DA’s Office and Admin. Office. The DA’s Office is actually a State and County Office combined so that can get a little confusing. Some of the other municipalities, after talking via email, are closing facilities to the public. Employees at those sites will be working from the Office, and doing business

by phone, email and fax. Some places are having a drop box so materials can be dropped off, the employees can retrieve them, do what they need to do and call them to return the item.

- Some challenges we face is the Knox County Court side, as of this morning, will still do In-custodies and Protection Orders and will have limited Public coming into the building. There will be no trials or Jury selection or anything like that.
- Some areas cannot be closed like the Airport, Jail, Sheriff's Department, EMA and Communications. Things can be done a little differently, like limiting some of the access in those Departments to ensure the safety of the employees.
- We may need to close the Courthouse (County side) for sometime but we need more discussion.
 - a) **Probate** – the Judge said this morning they are still going to do some limited things. Passports are still an item but if things change Elaine Hallett will have to put up a notice. Two other Counties Administrator Hart spoke with have closed their Probate office for thirty (30) days.
 - b) **Registry of Deeds** – this is a little different because of the type of transactions that they have. Some transitions are done electronically, but a lot of the transactions are done in person or through the mail. One County he spoke with said they were closing their Registry of Deeds.
 - c) **DA's Office** – District Attorney Natasha Irving stated that the DA's Office will still be doing In-custodies and Bail Hearings. The plan is toward the end of the week to have these in one location. Right now it's likely to be in Wiscasset or Sagadahoc. The Court will be operational, but very bare bones at minimum. Really only emergency type Hearings will be allowed. Natasha will send Administrator Hart the Order to close the Courts for everything except for In-custody arraignments, Bail Hearings, Protection from Abuse Orders, Child Protective Hearings and other types of Custodial Hearings. Most of the office will be working from home, some staff members are happy to stay and some are ready to work from home. It will all be video arraignments in Wiscasset and Rockland, with one Judge. A plan is being worked on currently.
 - d) **Finance** – This morning I posted that we are open to the Public. The only people that come to see us are employees of people that need to make a payment. They have the option of either mailing a check or calling us and making a credit card payment. So in essence we don't need to be open to the Public. Barbie and I have laptops and can connect but the only problem is we cannot print anything it would all go the office. That is somewhat limiting in how proficient we can be. Getting people paid is one of the most important things.
 - e) **Airport** – A bunch of changes have already been implemented such as the wash bay which has been closed down. We have locked that building down, so no Public will be entering that building, to use the restroom facility or just to come in and say hi. This is a "hang out" spot for a lot of Public. We are still an active pipeline to other areas that are dealing with Corona Virus. Cape Air is still operating their flights; they're still coming from Boston and New York. The Airport has a real active opportunity to expose our people to the Corona Virus. Airport Manager Shaw has had meetings with Cape Air and TSA and there is a good chance that that pipeline will stop in the coming days. I have asked that all TSA return to their offices at the end of their scheduled flights, as they do not have any real responsibilities to hang out in the terminal. We have three (3) restrooms in the terminal, we have traveling Public, Sheriff's Department, Cape Air and TSA that have direct access or direct exposure.

- f) **Sheriff's Department/Jail** – Sheriff had a meeting with the local Chiefs' and Director Coombs regarding the law enforcement side. Talked with other agencies to try to limit exposure, how we handle arrests, possibly change booking area to limit expose in the Jail, trying to take care of staff by limiting the single entrance/exit point for them. For the Jail three are "no contact visits" any longer, we have shut down programming as far as other groups coming in to assist with the Inmates inside. Allowing through our vendor, we can offer free video conferencing so Inmates can communicate with family members. The fingerprint collections are suspended, non emergent matters- no face to face contact only by phone. If a Deputy needs to go to a residence we are trying to have them stay outside during that communication and keeping their safe distance. We have a job to do by providing safety, so if we need to go, we have to go. We may be entering in an agreement we have with Waldo County in case we have a lot of sick Dispatchers. In that case you may hear different voices but it is just Waldo County helping out and vice versa.
- g) **Communications** – Director Coombs stated that no one really comes in just visitors, so if you're not an employee you will not be allowed in. We may be utilizing our agreement we have with Waldo County in case we have large influx of sick Dispatchers. If that is ever the case, you may hear different voices but it's just Waldo County helping out and vice versa.
- h) **EMA** – Director Sisk stated that they have been conducting limited EOC operations since January 31st, monitoring when this when this all first came out. We have made sure that we all have the ability to work from home if we need to. We have quite a bit of experience running decentralized operations, have shared documents that we can communicate on and have shared operational platform that we work through which includes video and audio. Everyone is aware that President Trump declared a Federal State of Emergency which is the same thing as a Federal Disaster Declaration. The only thing they allowing under public assistance piece is what is called a Category B for emergency protective measures. So if there is anything that you are doing outside of the norm that you had to implement in order to continue Government operations in the idea of these protective measures, please flag any of those invoices and costs so somewhere down the road we can look at potentially getting some reimbursement. For the Commissioners we may have to declare a State of Emergency for Knox County to be able to tap into that to allow us to receive federal assistance and other State assistance. The Governor declared a Civil State of Emergency last night. She ratcheted the 250 people meeting in a group setting down to 50 people in an area. They are looking at folks that fall into the "higher risk" categories like people with older folks, underlying medical conditions, Diabetes, Kidney Failure and Heart Disease. Those folks should not be in groups of more than ten (10). **PRACTICE SOCIAL DISTANCING!**
- Administrator Hart stated that currently, Cumberland County is thirty (30) days no Public, no Vendors or Contractors in any County buildings unless it's a strict emergency. They're all trying to find an alternative for the Post Man to drop the mail off. They closed Probate for thirty (30) days, they are still trying to figure out what to do with Deeds. They are also addressing people that go on vacation. If they go to a level 3 Country they can't come back to work they have to be screened and approved to come back to work first. They are putting those people on paid Admin. leave until they are cleared to come back to work. They can't meet with more than three (3) people and they have to be six (6) feet apart. They have not closed everything totally as of right now. Tomorrow, Sagadahoc will close all buildings to the Public. Employees are expected to continue to work. They have made

arrangements for secured mailboxes in their lobby. Employees were told to take CDC's word on congregating. Family and friends cannot visit the building; no specification was given on a timeline.

IV. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 3:50 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on April 14, 2020.