

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Monday – May 27, 2020 – 1:00 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Monday, May 27, 2020, at 1:00 P.M., via a teleconference call.

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

County staff present at the teleconference call included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Deputy Chief Patrick Polky, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Register Elaine Hallett, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Maintenance Manager James Hagan and HR Laurie Bouchard.

Absent: Jail Administrator Ray Porter, District Attorney Natasha Irving, Communications Director Robert Coombs and Finance Director Kathy Robinson.

Special Meeting – Agenda **Monday – May 27, 2020 – 1:00 P.M.**

- I. 1:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 1:01 Work Session with Department Managers**
- III. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Pohlman called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 1:03 P.M.

II. Work Session - Department Managers:

- **Registry of Deeds ~ Maddy Cole:**
Things are going good. When we open, people will be guided to the counter and not allowed to go any further at this time. A Plexiglas shield has been installed at the front counter with a slot to move paper work back and forth when needed. There will be two (2) computers available for the Public to utilize, but we are still encouraging people to go on line. Currently, the Public is using the drop box we provided in the lobby of the Courthouse which is working out well.
- **District Attorney’s Office – Shane Riley:**
Not much has changed for the D.A.’s Office. A physical barrier has been installed for the girls that work in the front office. Some drop boxes that law enforcement use are being relocated to a different location which limit the entry to our office. Natasha has reached out to all of our employees to get input/suggestions for when we reopen.
- **Finance Department – Kathy Robinson:**
Kathy Robinson was not present on the call.
- **Probate – Elaine Hallett:**
We are still working in the office as we cannot work from home, so are planning on being in the office next week when we open. We have been doing emergency situations for Court cases via Zoom conferences. We are having a half door installed with a slot for paperwork to pass, so when we open on June 1st the Public cannot come into our office. The Judge has been out with a broken leg so we haven’t had Court but will resume on the 17th. The plan is to have Court in the Court room because we can safely distance 6 feet between each other. We will be having our New Hire,

Chandra Pitcher start on Monday, June 1st. Chandra is taking Vicki Gamage's position, as Vicki is retiring.

- **KRCC – Robert Coombs:**

Bob Coombs was not present on the call.

- **EMA – Ray Sisk:**

Things in EMA are going quite well. We are working with a split crew as we flip schedules around to keep the number of people in the office down. There are usually 2-3 staff in the office at a time. We have five (5) people staffed at the EMA Office that provides coverage from seven (7) in the morning until seven (7) at night seven (7) days a week. I don't see that changing much in the near future. We did Respiratory Protection Program planning with twenty-four (24) of our twenty-eight (28) long term care facilities. We also covered the Airport and Penobscot Island Aviation as a critical transportation provider. EMA did offer the same assistance to the State Ferry Service but they were all squared away. All of that has gone pretty well. The State wants us to handle the resource requesting and tracking for the test swabs and transport media. This is for the hospital and all of the facilities in the County. That makes us the "go to" source to order the equipment for those folks when they are in need. We have delivered close to 20,000 N95 masks, gowns, gloves and face shields to our tiered responders that need those items. From Dupont, we did receive a fairly sizeable donation of hand sanitizer on Friday. Our plan is to get one (1) five (5) gallon pail of the sanitizer to each of the municipalities, Sheriff Department, Jail, Airport and Courthouse. We will also give a bunch of the hand sanitizer to the local food pantries as well. All in all, Dupont is donating around 180 gallons of the hand sanitizer to EMA.

- **IT – Mike Dean:**

Starting Monday, June 1st we are planning on returning to our normal schedules. For now we will monitor the situation, stay in the office and practice good social distancing.

- **Knox County Regional Airport – Jeremy Shaw:**

The Airport is in good shape and will be open for business on Monday, June 1st. We have been limiting the traffic into the building to just Cape Air passengers. The restaurant and gift shop is still not open for business. Right now, the only employee still working from home is our Administrative Assistant. Freight has increased for Penobscot Air, Cape Air has decreased on the passengers and Down East Air is still relatively slow. Budget Rental has started to rent some cars and during this slow time they did make some improvements in their area. Traffic was up a bit this Memorial Day weekend compared to this winter. Private aircraft arrivals are slightly down due to most of these people are out of states and with the 14 day quarantine in place most of these people are not coming as in years past. Things are moving along with the Class of 2020 Oceanside graduation at the Airport. We were on Channel 5 news (WABI) last night promoting the graduation at the Airport and the class is really putting things together nicely. The graduation will be live broadcast on Maine Coast TV and will also be on 93.3 WWRF FM station. I spoke with the Principal this morning and everyone is really excited about this opportunity. We have all the paperwork done with the FAA regarding the graduation, and we're still talking with the FAA regarding their concerns. We have 8 million square feet of pavement at the Airport that's why we figured it would be perfect for graduation. Passes will be handed out to parents and graduates so they can come on the Airfield. We do not expect any air traffic except for one (1) flight from Cape Air. We have contacted Belfast Airport to have planes come, which takes about 15 minutes from Belfast to arrive. We are planning on having one plane fly over every four (4) minutes for the backdrop for the graduating Seniors.

The proposed meeting with APAC and the Commissioners is scheduled for June 4th at 4:30 P.M. via Google Meets.

Right now we are considering the time frame for the Grant, and lining up projects and completing them as time is ticking. We are already half way through one (1) of the four (4) years we've been allotted. We still have to identify the projects we want done, and have to put it into a Grant

application which has to be vetted by the FAA. *(The selected projects have to be approved)*. We have to sign the Grant offer and have to have the permits in place. So, to my knowledge we haven't spend one penny of the two (2) million dollars that has been made available to offset the losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we have 15.9 million sitting out there that hasn't been applied for yet. It is my understanding that there will be more guidance coming from the FAA this week regarding the further curtailment of the use of the money. It's already May 27th and we're talking about weeks to be able to decide what the County wants to do with the money, so we're talking almost July. Then we still have to go through all the steps. At this point the decisions really rest with the APAC and Commissioners.

Sheriff's Department/Patrol – Sheriff Carroll:

- We have been working on a few different “parades”. The Sheriff's Department has participated in a couple of parades in support of kids' birthdays. We will also participate in the June 9th Oceanside parade for Graduation. We have been participating in the Meals on Wheels program from the USDA, delivering packages once a month for them, helping get the food and necessities to people who are in need. That whole experience has been a positive for the Patrol side of the Sheriff's Department. The Deputies when they are out patrolling you will see they are wearing face masks and are trying to keep social distancing as much as possible. We did have our first fatality of the year last week which has brought to light some challenges for us regarding emergency scenes, emergence responses and trying to still keep social distancing. When you're wearing a face mask it is hard to clearly communicate with others. Overall, the guys did a great job. I have seen an increase in the domestic violence side of things. We have been responding to quite a few calls of “someone's not wearing their face mask”, so we're trying to help the Public understand the laws that are in place so we are not getting so many of those types of calls.

Jail – Sheriff Carroll:

- As of today, the Jail is responsible for forty-one (41) inmates. We have thirty (30) that are in the Jails custody. The rest are up to the Re-Entry Center in Belfast or on home confinement. So far this all seems to be working out well. Before the pandemic a lot of the inmates were doing work like mowing lawns, working in the Jail's garden and regular upkeep of the property. Since this pandemic we have not been able to have the inmates doing any of this. It is said that you should take a year off from the gardens and fertilize the gardens with fresh stock. So we have decided this would be the perfect opportunity to do so. We do have quite a few acres that produce a lot of food for the Jail and local pantries in Knox County. We are making sure that the inmates get their visitations while they are at the Jail as this is critical to all. There is no touch or contact visitation but at least the inmates can communicate and talk on the video phones. The phone vendors are not currently charging for the use of the phones. There are some Correction Officer vacancies currently, and we are in the process of looking for a Food Service Manager, as Bruce Sheaff will be retiring in August. Bruce has been the Food Services Manager for 33 years. That is quite a long tenure and we wish him nothing but the best. We are hoping when we find the right person to fill the position that person can have a bit of time to work with Bruce to see how it all works.

III. Other

- Administrator Hart returned from being out of state and is working from home. He will be done with his quarantine on Friday, June 5th, and will be back in the office on Monday, June 8th.
- An email outlining the reopening guidelines was sent out on May 26th to all. Administrator Hart received confirmation from the State that they are opening June 1st at 8:00 A.M. We are waiting to hear official word from the Chief Justice that June 1st is the plan, as this will impact the County side as well.
- Administrator Hart has asked each Department Manager to submit a plan explaining their plan of staffing for June 1st opening.
- Jim Hagan has been busy installing “Plexiglas” shields, and placing 6 foot social distancing markings in each department
- Hand sanitizer stations are located throughout the building.

- Employees have a guideline that if you are in a “shared space” in the Court side you MUST wear a mask. (*Per the Court orders*)
- The County is providing masks for the employees, not for the Public.
- Things should be ready for the opening on Monday, June 1st.
- Administrator Hart stated that for now, we will have Commission Meetings via Google Meets, and will be re-evaluating things once June is over.
- There is an unemployment fraud going around right now. We had one prior employee who has retired that we received an unemployment claim for. So this is an up and coming issue that the FBI is now involved with.
- Update on the Jail: The test pits were dug and S.W. Cole is working on writing a report of what observed and their recommendations. We are hoping to have the report by the end of this week.

IV. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 2:29 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

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