

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Friday – October 15, 2021 – 9:00 A.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Friday, October 15, 2021, at 9:00 A.M., at the Knox County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

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 included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Deputy Chief Patrick Polky, Captain Paul Pinkham, Corrections Administrator Robert Wood, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Communications Director Robert Coombs, Register Elaine Hallet, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Maintenance Manager James Hagan and District Attorney Natasha Irving.

Absent: Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw

Special Meeting – Agenda **Friday – October 15, 2021 – 9:00 A.M.**

- I. 9:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 9:01 Discussion Item**
 - Review of the 2022 Knox County Budget Draft.
- III. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Parent called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 9:01 A.M.

Administrator Harts high points of 2022 Budget Review:

- A first draft of the 2022 Budget was sent on Thursday to the Commissioners and Department Managers to view.
- CPI for this year is 5.83%, compares to 1.39% for the 2021 Budget and 1.53% for the 2020 Budget.
- We budgeted 10% for Health Insurance, Workers Comp and Risk Pool. Assessments for all three (3) should arrive in November and December.
- This Budget is a total of \$1,249,124.00 which is an increase of 14.79%. That is for the County Tax portion.
- Communications Budget which is an Assessment is \$9,130 over last year's Budget, which is a 1% increase.
- Proposed assessment is \$9,886,089, Dispatch Assessment fee is \$1,291,976 that compares to \$8,612,872 in 2021.
- We used \$100,000 in the Undesignated Fund Balance to reduce 2021 Tax Assessment. We are proposing to use \$200,000 from Undesignated Fund Balance to reduce the 2022 Tax Assessment.
- There are five (5) reasons for the increase:
 - 1) Increase in Personnel Services in all departments based on wage increase and potential benefit increase.
 - 2) \$227,578 increase in the Building Maintenance Budget at the Courthouse that includes an increase of 16.5% in Building Repairs and Maintenance and \$200,000 increase in Capital Projects.
 - 3) \$182,000 increase in the Sheriff's Office Budget a good portion of that is wages and benefits, a new position and \$30,000 increase in vehicle replacement costs.

- 4) \$948,000 in Corrections Budget – Includes a \$616,000 increase in the Jail Inmate Medical Services Contract.
- 5) \$278,000 in Capital Projects.

II. 2022 Budget Review - Department Managers:

- **District Attorney's Office: pg.15-16**
 - 6% increase in overall Budget – Due to wages and benefits.
 - Budgeting for Prosecutors Conference. Will not attend in person this year due to COVID. Next year anticipating attending in Bar Harbor. Thus the increase of 110% in Lodging.
 - Decrease 25% internet web hosting
 - 38% increase in postage and shipping mainly due to COVID.
 - 19% increase for Training this year, due to the cost of the training has increased overall. With this training (Prosecutors Conference) all Prosecutors in the State of Maine get their continuing legal credits.
 - 311% increase Computer Supplies & Equipment – need to order new computers for team.
 - Deferred Disposition fees – slightly down, 28% due to COVID considerations. If someone unable to pay we have been waiving fees.
 - Finance Director Robinson stated that a lot of these lines have a big increase due to frontloading.
- **Deeds: pgs. 13-14**
 - Expecting an increase in revenue.
 - Changing the computer supplies and equipment (workstations and chairs) \$5,430.00. Deeds was approved for a Safety Grant of \$2,000.
 - The trend is that real estate prices are not going down, and we will collect more tax due to value of property.
 - The real estate market is staying steady not dropping off at all.
 - The revenue portion is a moving number; it is monitored all throughout the year.
- **Probate – Elaine Hallett: pg. 23-24**
 - Increase in Computer supplies and equipment due to was asking for four (4) new computers due to current ones all old and outdated.
 - Passports are starting to pick up.
- **Finance – Kathy Robinson: pg 19-20**
 - MUNIS - for last six (6) years able to keep at same rate, this year it is increasing.
- **MISC – pg. 27**
 - Annual payment to Homeless Coalition – want to consider an annual contribution? Consider a smaller ARPA payment
- **KRCC – Robert Coombs: pg 32-33**
 - Not a lot of changes on operations side
 - Resignation & termination is the biggest issue. Right now getting more out of state applicants, locals are not applying. This is the same across the State. More than half the people that are applying are only doing it for Unemployment purposes, they are not seriously looking.

- Not traveling for classes right now due to COVID.
 - 1% increase in the 2022 Budget for Communications.
 - \$70,000 from ARPA for radio upgrade. *(This will be removed)*
 - \$2,600 from ARPA for touch screen monitors. *(This will be removed)*
 - \$300,000 from ARPA for the microwave equipment.
 - The three items below the microwave are not crucial. The microwave is the most important.
 - Extension of premium pay stipend until June. Commissioner Meriwether asked do you this as a onetime expenditure or as a shortfall in their wages? This was placed in the ARPA by Director Robinson due to the contract negotiations.
- **EMA – Ray Sisk: pg 17-18**
 - Some fluctuation in contractual expenses.
 - 48% increase meal expenses at EMA. Typically \$125 per person per week for training and this year it has gone to \$134 per person.
 - Decrease of 53% for telephones. Reduced lines from eight (8) to four (4). City Watch was shut down and was purchased from a competitor. Right now we do not have a replacement.
 - 8% increase on fuel. Have ¾ ton pickup truck, great for towing not best as a commuter vehicle. We are foreseeing around 3,000 miles this year for travel.
 - Increase in copy paper - went from \$30 per case to \$42 per case.
 - Equipment that was frontloaded in 2021 so now seeing the increase this year.
 - Reintroducing the \$10,000 Capital replacement amount for a vehicle, have moved to next year.
 - Moved Letecia's GIS time around a bit. Allows her to pick up six (6) extra hours which will go away this year. She will stay at 36 hours going forward.
 - A handful of ARPA projects – (not in EMA budget)
 - Hazmat Decontamination Center at Pen Bay Medial Center – have a \$20,000 place holder to replace for them incase insurance will not cover. This structure is an external structure which is collapsible and inflatable structure that allows people to get cleaned up before they enter the hospital. *(This will stay on for further discussion.)*
 - Solar for Public Safety Building - 125 KW for the building. Most can up is 68.5 kilowatts. (Energy resiliency project) with 125 kilowatts could support the whole building during sunny days. The way the metering and the new solar laws are in the State of Maine there is not a huge benefit to add solar to the Public Safety Building. *(Solar project will be removed the list.)*
 - Stipend extension for January 1- June 30, 2022 for premium pay for essential workers. Director Sisk is not looking to receive that for EMA. He feels EMAs biggest risk was prior to this year.
 - Commissioner Meriwether feels that County wide, if there is a problem with wages being underpaid we should not be using ARPA funds in order to compensate for that shortfall. This issue needs to be addressed in the Budget
 - Commissioner Pohlman stated that given the amount of money the Towns receive they need to use their money to compensate; it should be a municipal duty.
 - Premium pay (essential workers) for local Emergency Directors (18 total) at the Town level of \$1,000 per person, for a total of \$18,000. *(This will stay for a month to sort things out.)*
 - Two Commissioners agreed that given the amount of money that all the Towns will be receiving it is incumbent upon them to provide essential services to their Town employees.
 - Director Sisk is asking for \$1.5 mil for private sectors – day care operators, PCA care for citizens that cannot get out, stocking shelves, pumping gas delivering heating fuel etc. the estimate would be around \$2,400.00 per person which is an estimate. *(This will stay on for further discussion.)*
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 - Will be receiving all the ARPA application requests for food related programs and see what EMA can do.

- **Admin. & IT – Mike Dean: pgs. 8-9**
 - Personnel Services has an increase of 8%
 - Wages – Increased due to two (2) positions in IT have been reclassified.
 - Benefits – Increased because it is tied to wages
 - Commodities -
 - Labor Relations – two (2) contract renewals – had to involve legal that was major part of increase.
 - Phone systems – upgrading out telephone service coming into the building and also our current phone systems are ten (10) plus years old. We were told we should have been upgraded by now. However, priorities have never been there because they work. *(This will be removed from the list.)*

- **Maintenance – Jim Hagan: pgs. 10- 11**
Courthouse:
 - Contractual went up due to wages & cleaning (COVID cleaning).
 - Carpet and stair-treds are safety items that need to be repaired this year.
 - \$272 for panic buttons on each desk.
 - Electrical repairs – Balast, lightening issue. Having trouble getting a contractor.
 - Sewage went up due to plumbing issues at the beginning of the year. Had budgeted \$823, the trend is heading up and that \$823 is a low number. It's an \$800 increase from last year.
 - Water – trended about \$3,500 and budgeted \$2,772, we will end up being closer to the \$3,500. Building upgrade – cannot put this off due to it was last done in 2009-2010, bricks and mortar falling off due to safety hazard. Next year budgeting for the next elevation of the Courthouse. We are on historic registry. Jim Hagan will have Knowles check this work and see if can hold off until 2023.
 - \$175,000 HVAC upgrade – *(Will be removed for this year).*
 - HVAC lease purchase will be paid off in 2025. (\$67,089.00)
 - \$6,050 for a Permanent solution in Deeds for a Plexiglas window. *(This will be taken off)*

Maintenance– Jim Hagan – pg. 12**Public Safety:**

- Water was down due to no employees in the building due to floor issue and COVID.
 - Total Maintenance Budget on Public Safety Building is down.
 - Have a meeting with Siemens on Oct. 20th regarding the Sheriff's Office mold issue. *(This could be a climate change issue.)* Had to rip out floor and walls to remove mold, had to drywall, new floors, caulk and paint. Communications has not been effected. Have filed a claim with Risk Pool to pay for the damages, so this is not in the Budget as of right now (providing the claim gets approved.)
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- **Knox County Regional Airport – Jeremy Shaw: pg. 28-30**
 - Airport is funded by CARES Act.

 - **Sheriff's Department/Patrol – Sheriff & Chief Patrick Polky: pgs. 25-26**
 - Revenue – Increase - Asking to increase Civil Deputy position to a 40 hour position. Have two right now and both are 25 hours. Total impact would be \$46,000.
 - Personnel - 1% increase in wages. Only have 26 pay periods this year had 27 last year.

- Contractual – 90K contract thru Volunteers of America. Waldo County is doing this checking to see if can do same thing here due to success in Waldo County. This person would be working with law enforcement and answering calls.
- Gas – increase due to gas prices increasing throughout the United States.
- Maintenance – increase – potential of not being able to get a new car until next year. Will be a short window to order a new vehicle and could be looking at 2023.
- Computer Supplies & Equipment Increase – need to update laptops and some desk tops.
- **Corrections – Robert Wood & Chief Patrick Polky: pg. 21-22**
 - Personnel - 25% Increase for wages four (4) new positions, two (2) Corrections Officers, one (1) Discharge Planner & one (1) Diversion Deputy.
 - Diversion Deputy will help manipulate/ manage the Correctional facility. This person would help maintain conditions. Helps keep track of population make sure people get help they need.
 - Discharge Planner – working with other resources within the Community such as find housing, transportations, health care etc. Make sure things are in place to help them succeed when they get out of Jail. Making sure resources available once out of Jail.
 - Medical – this year was last year of a three (3) year contract with current medical provider. Four (4) bids were received. One company only bid on the Mental Health portion. Three (3) companies bid for the complete contract. We were looking at a minimum increase of \$200,000. The one that offers the most is the most expensive of the three (3). (\$969,000.00) Have not awarded the contract yet. Have had issues with current vendor so not looking to renew with them.
 - Increase in COVID lab tests. Can now do a rapid test if someone has symptoms of COVID.
 - Food increase 33% - cost of food is up this is something that cannot be adjusted.
 - Dishwasher – a new one is needed. It has to be commercial brand and to meet certain standards.

Airport Security – Sheriff & Chief Patrick Polky: pg. 31

- Biggest increase auto repairs & maintenance.
- Phone increase contractual 75%
- Workers Comp went up – this is driven off of what salaries are.

III. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on November 9, 2021.