

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION KNOX COUNTY BUDGET COMMITTEE

Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting

Knox County Commission and Budget Committee **Tuesday – November 9, 2021 – 5:00 P.M.**

A Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was held on Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at 5:00 P.M., Knox County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The Administrative Assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present: Commissioner Dorothy G. Meriwether District #1 and Commissioner Richard L. Parent, District #2.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Communications Director Robert Coombs, EMA Director Ray Sisk, and Maintenance Manager James Hagan.

Budget Committee members present: Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover.

Absent: Commissioner Sharyn L. Pohlman, District #3 and Shawn Levasseur.

Others in Attendance: Pen Bay Pilot Reporter Chris Wolf and Rockport Select Board Denise Munger.

**Joint Commission & Budget Committee Review Meeting
Tuesday – November 9, 2021 – 5:00 P.M.**

Please click on the link below to view the meeting:

https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=50&id=40993

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| I. | 5:00 | Meeting Called To Order (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Richard Parent for the Knox County Commission) |
| II. | 5:01 | Public Comment |
| III. | 5:05 | Approve Minutes (Vice Chair Roger Peabody for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Richard Parent for the Knox County Commission)
1. Minutes of the Joint Budget Meeting of November 4, 2021. |
| IV. | 5:10 | Budget Review
1. Emergency Management Agency (Pgs. 17-18)
2. Communications (Pgs. 32-35)
3. Building Maintenance - Courthouse (Pgs. 10-11)
4. Building Maintenance - KCPSB (Pg. 12)
5. Finance (Pgs. 19-20) |
| V. | | Adjourn |

I. Meeting Called to Order

The November 9, 2021 Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting was called to order by Budget Committee Vice Chair Roger Peabody and Commissioner Chair Richard Parent at 5:01 P.M.

- *Vice Chair Peabody made a motion to call the meeting to order at 5:01P.M.*
- *Commissioner Parent made a motion to call the meeting to order at 5:01P.M.*

II. Public Comment:

None

III. Approve Minutes

1. Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of November 4, 2021.

- *Bob Duke made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of November 4, 2021. Gayle Gallant seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to approve the Minutes of the Joint Commission and Budget Committee Review Meeting of November 4, 2021. Commissioner Parent seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- Administrator Hart read a statement from Commissioner Pohlman: Commissioner Pohlman is in California as her mother passed away over the weekend. Our thoughts are with her during this difficult time.
- The ARPA letter that all the Budget Committee members have in front of them was read in today's Commission Meeting by Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether. To sum up the letter, it states the remaining ARPA funds will be reviewed by the Budget Committee and Commissioners after we finish the 2022 Budget Review. The proposal would be a plan to move forward sometime in the beginning of 2022, sometime in January. The Commissioners and Budget Committee would meet, and start the process of approving expenditures. Then they would submit an amended Budget, and similar to what we are doing with this Budget we would go through the Budget process. Once that amended Budget is approved then we would file the amended Budget with the State Auditor.
- A question was presented – So this process will be done after the Budget has been approved?
- Administrator Hart stated that the Commissioners felt made sense was to finish the 2022 Budget as presented. We really cannot change the Budget right now because it's already been presented to the Budget Committee. To try to amend it now would be a lot of works, so it just makes sense to finish this Budget, get it approved, and then as a separate item in 2022 create an amended Budget to the 2022 Budget that was originally presented as early as we can.
- A Budget Committee member asked – So this would follow after the formal Budget is approved?
- Administrator Hart stated yes that is right, sometime in January 2022.
- A question was presented to Administrator Hart – not real familiar with the application of the funds but it does state that “these recipients may use these funds for direct stimulus payments to Residents for rebates on property taxes. That doesn't apply to the County right?
- Administrator Hart stated that is correct. We have spent a lot of time trying to figure out what is eligible and what isn't, we have a Consultant and we are continuously working on that. We will have that information in January 2022.
- A Budget Committee member stated that when the ARPA issue was first brought to the Committee, at that time it was clear that it was not within our role to be involved in the disposition of the funding. The County Charter specifically says that the role of the Budget Committee is to review the Budget and only the Budget, pass it up or down and that is it. Has there been some directive from the Government or Legal that we need to be involved?
- Administrator Hart stated that initially, if you look at the guidelines it does not require that. The understanding was that it was not a requirement to go through that whole process. Then it was brought to light that Federal funds in the statute require that you go through a Budget process. There is unanticipated and anticipated so, when we did the 2021 Budget it was unanticipated

because we did not know we were getting the money. Now the rest of the money we have, we know about it and received it. Initially, we thought that was not the process, but with legal guidance showed that it changed.

- A Commissioner strongly suggested for all Budget Committee members to review the Charter and Statutes.
- A Budget Committee member asked - Can any of those funds in our possession be used for anything in this Budget to offset the Budget at this time?
- Administrator Hart stated that he asked the Consultant that question, and now we are waiting for clarification on that. He is hoping to have that answer within the next couple of meetings.

V. Public Hearing:

1. Budget Committee Vice Chair Peabody Opens Public Hearing on 2022 Proposed Knox County Budget – opened to Public at 5:06 P.M.

- No Public Comment

2. Budget Committee Chair Peabody closes Public Hearing at 5:08 P.M.

VI. Budget Review:

- ***Please note: All votes taken at each Joint Commission & Budget Committee Budget Review Meetings on Departmental Budgets are “straw votes”, with the exception of the December 16, 2021 final vote on the 2022 Knox County Budget.***

1. Emergency Management Agency (Pgs. 17-18)

- Our budget his year is unremarkable.
- We do have little program funding changing for supporting the GIS position. This last did this was done with an EMPGS which is a COVID supplemental Grant to cover six (6) hours of Leticia’s time. Now that has been shifted over to 100% funding through a Homeland Security Grant. This drops our Personnel line by 1%.
- Telephone charges – Phone lines have been reduced from eight (8) lines in the EOC, which supported our City web system. Now that web system has been shut down to EMA is done to four (4) lines. EMA will be shifting over to a VoIP style system which will cost less.
- Food – small increase – trying to plan for two (2) people to attend the Emergency Management Institute per year. Only charge that we are required to recover from that is food. The meal ticket went from \$124 to \$348.
- Fuel – based on EIA projects of \$2.75 gal. Then we add 30 cent per gallon kicker for premium fuel as it will give better miles for the EMA truck.
- Computer Supplies & Equipment – increased from \$150 to \$ 250 to better reflect how our cost for peripheral equipment such as keyboards etc.
- One item that bumps EMA up across the board is Vehicle Replacement Capital – On the 3rd year of off and on funding to build some capital money to replace the EMA truck which is a 2010 GMC – looking for this to be a 2023 purchase.

Questions:

- A Budget Committee member asked if the six (6) hour Geospatial EMPG grant is a one (1) year grant.

- Director Sisk stated that it is a multiyear grant. It is being looked into continuing that into the future. As long as we can make a case to continue to fund it through the EMPG. 24 hours of her weekly time is covered through that 50% reimbursement grant. Right now we have some CARES Act money covering four (4) hours. The six (6) hours for the Homeland Security grant. That leaves us a couple hours a week we have to seek County funding.
- A Budget Committee member asked when the CARES Act will expire.
- Director Robinson stated it will expire in 2024. So if her hours are not needed any more than her hours would be reduced.
- A Budget Committee member \$175,000 of budget is salaries and \$55,000 for benefits is Social Security etc., and that only leaves you \$25,000 for operating so how do you do it?
- Director Sisk responded by saying that we look for ways to fund the program through Grants first. We have any number of Grant programs throughout the year going. EMA also goes to State Surplus for office equipment and office furniture.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$120,475:

In favor: 7 (Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$120,475:

In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

2. Communications (Pgs. 32-33)

- Communication Director Coombs stated that this year’s Budget has been held at bare minimal. Anything that has increased is basically out of our hands.
- Retention and Termination – We have some retirement coming up so they are putting money aside to prepare for that. Other than that most everything else has been lowered.
- Tower Rental – One of the Tower companies has a 5% increase each year.
- Training – lowered for the mileage due to not traveling. Classes are not being offered in person yet. Classes are mostly performed on line right now.
- Equipment & Repairs – This line went down some. Certain things were moved around.
- Computer Repairs & Maintenance – There is an increase of 6% due to redoing some contract with our vendors for maintenance.

Questions:

- A Budget Committee member asked about the Wages line– In 2020 had Budget of \$657,000 and came in at \$529,000. This year you have a Budget of slightly more and you are currently through nine (9) months at \$398,000. Where do you think you’ll end up this year?
- Director Coombs replied, “We are down six (6) people right now, so overtime will counterbalance that. We are working two handed instead of three handed because we are down so many people.”

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$0:

In favor: 7 (Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Nick Lapham, Randy Stearns and Charles Grover)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's Budget recommendation of \$0:

In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)

Against: 0

Abstained: 0

3. Building Maintenance - Courthouse (Pgs. 10-11)

- Snow Plowing/Sanding is up a bit from last year.
- Increase in Maintenance pay – It has been hard finding help. The potential new employees have to pass a background check and be willing to work in a potential COVID risk every day. Maintenance Manager Hagan is giving \$3.00 more an hour than last year.
- Maintenance Manager Hagan stated that there are more Janitor hours in winter than in the summer. This is due to the slush, salt & sand that gets tracked in on people's boots in the Winter.
- Maintenance Manager Hagan has to pay Maintenance workers more than Cleaners due to they have to do more laborious work.
- Stair treads need to be replaced and carpet in the front areas. Painting is also needed in some areas. We do not hire out for this. The painting is done in house by a Maintenance worker.
- Right now there are six (6) Ballast lights that are out. It's hard to get an electrician.
- Elevator Repair & Maintenance has increased to \$500.00. The annual smoke test not included in KONE PM Contract. This is an annual requirement.
- Commodities have pretty much stayed the same.

Questions:

- A Budget Committee member asked if we have a lease with the State that caps what our increases are.
- Administrator Hart stated that the Contract with the State was recently renewed and would have to look it over as he was not sure.
- A Budget Committee member asked where we are maintaining the building and its costing us more to maintain the State side, is there was an opportunity to raise the rent for the State side.
- Director Robinson stated she based the figure that's under the revenue is based off the updated costs. So if our costs are increasing then the State contract should be amended to reflect our maintenance cost. As far as the State, other things we charge them for is they pay 50% of our Maintenance/Supplies & Equipment. They pay 50% of the the cost of that we incur.
- A Budget Committee member asked is the building upgrade like masonry something that might qualify for ARPA funds.
- Administrator Hart stated he does not think it would, that's why we put it in the Budget and offset with Reserves.
- A Budget Committee member stated that it looks like our costs to maintain and clean the spaces are higher than 4% more than the prior year. So should the amount for next year be higher than a 4% increase?
- Director Robinson stated that if you look at the Cleaning & Maintenance then it does say 4%. If you go down to Revenue and look at State Janitorial it shows 4% increase.
- Administrator Hart stated that when we calculate we base our cost to them off of square footage. Square footage of what belongs to the County and square footage of what belongs to the State. That's the fair way to do it.
- A Budget Committee member had a question on the Building Repairs & Maintenance and Electrical Repairs & Maintenance it seems like every year our Budget has been much higher than our actual. Are we budgeting in our Budget for things that we didn't do the prior year so the people are paying for the same service for multiple times?

- Maintenance Manager Hagan stated there are some things we are doing in house rather than hire outside of the County.
- A Budget Committee member said the grand total for this year is budgeted at \$379,000, but September YTD is \$102,000. Is everything back loaded so it comes in the last 1/3 of the year for expenses? How does that work? We still have \$270,000 worth of expenses coming in near the end of the year.
- Director Robinson stated that some of our Service Agreements that come in at the end of the year. Based on the amount of thing going on at psb some things that normally happen haven't been able to happen. A lot of vendors are slow to bill, maybe its lack on manpower. The two biggest things in the Budget are under the HVAC under the Capital, the lease purchase and Building Envelope. Those two are \$169,000 and \$67,000 we do not receive those invoices until the end of this month. We try to push bigger items near the end of the year, and need to wait until we get our tax money.
- A Budget Committee member asked is it not possible to get a YTD actual and YTD Budget. This is so when we look at this can ok we know where we are nine (9) months YTD?
- Director Robinson stated that there are different invoices that come in at different times per month it would be quite labor intensive and very confusing and would not help to necessarily answer the questions.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's Budget recommendation of \$420,920:

*In favor: 8 (Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, and Charles Grover)
Against: 2 (Bob Duke and Randy Stearns)
Abstained: 1 (Nick Lapham)*

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's Budget recommendation of \$420,920:

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0*

4. Building Maintenance - KCPSB (Pg. 12)

- Snow Plowing /Landscaping have gone up a bit since last year.
- Cleaning also gone up due to a seven (7) day a week cleaning with COVID. Had to buy HEPA vacuums due to the mold issues.
- Building Repair & Maintenance –

Questions:

- A Budget Committee member asked shouldn't the insurance cover the expenses for plumbing.
- Director Robinson stated that the \$1,000 that is in there now is for the unknowns that may come up during the year. As far as the expenses that are happening now are being submitted to the insurance and are still in the process.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator's Budget recommendation of \$82,384:

*In favor: 7 (Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, Bob Duke, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham, and Charles Grover)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0*

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$82,384:

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0*

5. Finance (Pgs. 19-20)

- Deputy Finance Director will be working six (6) less hours per week.
- Increase in MUNIS (financial software) contract is a first time increase in six (6) years.
- There is money available to upgrade MUNIS – something not locked into but would like to have that enhancement (\$3,606.00)
- Revenue is projecting a little less in CARES – we’ve ironed out some kinks so won’t have to work as much researching.

Questions:

- A Budget Committee member asked would that upgrade enhances the ability to work where you will not be having the Deputy Director work those six (6) hours per week?
- Director Robinson stated that she would hope so because some of the reports they do now it could be done in less time.

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$318,037:

*In favor: 7 (Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Randy Stearns, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0*

A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Administrator’s Budget recommendation of \$318,037:

*In favor: 2 (Commissioner Parent and Commissioner Meriwether)
Against: 0
Abstained: 0*

- Administrator Hart needs to know by next Tuesday, November 16th if any Budget Committee member or Commissioner would like a certain Department Manager to come back for further questions on their Budget.
- Administrator Hart wanted to remind everyone that next week we have two (2) meetings.
- Administrator Hart stated the explanation of how ARPA funds can be used will be available sometime in January 2022.

VII. Adjourn

- *Bob Duke made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Barry Norris seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *Commissioner Meriwether made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Parent seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

The next Joint Quarterly Budget Committee & Commission Meeting will be held on November 16th

@ 5:00 P.M.

The meeting adjourned at 5:58 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Budget Committee and Knox County Commission approved these minutes
at the Joint Meeting held on November 16, 2021.**