

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday – June 8, 2021 – 2:00 P.M.**

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, at 2:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

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

**County staff present included:** County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Communications Director Robert Coombs, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Chief Deputy Patrick Polky, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Bob Wood and District Attorney Natasha Irving

**Others:** Maintenance Manager James Hagan, Stephanie Primm Knox County Homeless Coalition Executive Director, Denise Lord Maine State Housing Planning & Communications Senior Director, Maine Housing, Debra Hall, MidCoast Internet Coalition Chair & Rockport Select Board Chair, Christopher Mitchell, Institute for Local Self Reliance, Nathan Davis Rockland City Council and Co-Founder of Steel House, Rockland City Council, Craig Currie, Cushing Selectman, Dr. Cliff Dacso, South Thomaston Broadband Committee Chair, Ben Dorr, Rockland City Council & Co-Owner of Curator a consignment store, Rockland City Council, Brian Doyle, Thomaston Economic Development Specialist, Sara Smith, Hope Select Board Chair, Audra Caler, Camden Town Manager, Denise Munger, Rockport Select Board Vice Chair and Matt Siegel, MidCoast Internet Coalition Vice Chair, Matt Sielgel IT, and Jeff Northgraves.

**Absent:**

## **Regular Meeting – Agenda Tuesday – June 8, 2021 – 2:00 P.M.**

**\*REVISED\***

- I. 2:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 2:01 Presentation**
  1. Maine Housing Authority.
- III. 2:20 Presentation**
  1. MidCoast Internet Coalition.
- IV. 2:40 Public Comment - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the chair.**
- V. 2:41 Consent Items**
  1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:
    - i. Agenda - Non Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
    - ii. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
    - iii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of April 13, 2021.
    - iv. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of May 11, 2021.
    - v. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of May 28, 2021.
    - vi. Warrants.
- VI. 2:45 Action Items**
  1. Act to Award the Bid for a Zero Turn Mower for Use by the Knox County Regional Airport.
  2. Act to Award the Bid for the Knox County Correctional Facility & Knox County Public Safety Building Paving Project.
  3. Act to Approve the Additional Payments Per Month for the Knox County Jail Inmate Medical Contract with QCCH in an Amount not to Exceed \$43,200.

- VII. 3:00 Discussion Items**
1. APAC's Recommendation to Purchase Maintenance Equipment for Use by the Knox County Regional Airport.
  2. Update on the KCPSB Floor Repair Project.
  3. Update on the Jail HVAC Project.
  4. Update on Airport HVAC Project
  5. Other
- VIII. 3:10 Other Business**
- IX. Adjourn**

**I. Meeting Called to Order**

Commissioner Parent called the regular meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:05 P.M.

**II. Presentation**

1. Maine State Housing Authority – Denise Lord spoke: *(15 minute presentation)*

- A building has been offered to MSHA, but they currently do not have funding to purchase it. She noted that there are a lot of empty buildings in the area that could be restructured/repurposed; however, funding to purchase a building is the first step.
- Commissioner Meriwether is asking MSHA to put in writing what percentage of the \$7 million they are looking to receive.
- **Overview of KCHC:**

The KCHC team is an innovative and visionary group of compassionate professionals—humans helping humans.

KCHC provides shelter, food, transportation, mental health support, and life skills training through comprehensive, wrap-around care. Our 2-generation approach includes on-going post housing support and a youth program—The Landing Place—that reaches at-risk kids.

In recognition of KCHC's success, Executive Director, Steph Primm was appointed chair of the Statewide Homeless Council.

Most importantly, even during the pandemic when services are delivered virtually or remotely, KCHC is building trusting relationships by supporting, and caring for each individual and family with dignity, empathy, and respect.

Knox County Homeless Coalition delivers home, help, and hope providing comprehensive, wrap around services built on trust.

- **A PowerPoint presentation was presented: KCHC is Meeting The Need**
  - a) Addressing 150% increase in emergency shelter requests
  - b) Serving more than 500 individuals in the community
  - c) Preparing for increased need when the harsh winter arrives
  - d) Distributing an average of 200% more food
  - e) Constantly innovating for safe service deliver
  - f) Regularly engaging youth, virtually, remotely and in-person
  - g) Partnering to develop effective solutions for affordable housing

- **A current example of collaboration for affordable housing:**
  - a) A balanced and diversified neighborhood of hope consisting of nineteen (19) total affordable housing units.
  - b) 8 individual rental units – 500 square feet each
  - c) 3 duplexes – each consisting of one 900 square feet 2- bedroom, and one 1100 square foot 3-bedroom rental
  - d) 5 free standing Habitat for Humanity homes for purchase
- Commissioner Meriwether is asking MSHA to put in writing what percentage of the \$7.7 million dollars they are looking to receive. We are **NO WHERE** near allocating these funds.
- Commissioner Pohlman thanked Denise and Stephanie for their time and commitment to finding housing solutions in Maine and for sharing the presentation today. The lack of affordable housing is a state-wide crisis that does impact every sector of our economy. She also spoke on behalf of the local islands regarding affordable housing.

### III. Presentation

#### 1. **MidCoast Internet Coalition – Debra Hall, Chair MidCoast Internet Coalition & Rockport Select Board Chair:**

- **Proposed project guidelines:**
  - a) High speed broadband service, with fiber to the premises (FTTP) for all homes and businesses (universal access)
  - b) Minimum symmetrical network speeds of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload, with availability of up to 1 Gigabit
  - c) Affordable fees to consumers of \$50-\$60/month for 100/100 service
  - d) Open access
  - e) Competition among internet service providers (ISPs) on the dark fiber network to keep user costs low
  - f) Local customer service
- Power Point presentation – MidCoast Internet by **Chris Mitchell** – *(To view, go to Town Hall Streams)*
- **Nate Davis** serves on the Rockland City Council, and is a co-founder of a collaborative workspace in Rockland – Steel House. He is also a computer programmer and software developer. **Entrepreneurs and Small Business: Remote Work** *(5 min. presentation)*
- **Craig Currie** is a Selectman in Cushing - **Remote Learning for Students of All Ages** *(5 min. presentation)*
- **Ben Dorr** serves on Rockland City Council, & Co-Owner of Curator - a consignment store – **Maines future: Attracting Diversity and Youth** – *(5 min presentation)*
- **Brian Doyle**, Town of Thomaston, Economic development Specialist- **A Driving Force: Economic Development** – *(5 min presentation)*
- **Clifford Dacso**, MD, MPH – **Reaching the Vulnerable: Telehealth** – *(5 min presentation)*
- **Audra Caler** – Camden Town Manager – **Financial Models: Seed funding** – This will build the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of the network. The total cost of Phase 1 is estimated to be about \$16 million dollars. We are hoping the County would consider to invest in \$4 million into the Seed funding that would be necessary for the 1<sup>st</sup> Phase of building out the network. That money would be matched by the Maine Connectivity Authority or

Connect Maine one to one. We would raise the final \$8 million dollars through a theme backed non-collateralized loan. So this would represent a four to one return on investment to the residents of Knox County.

- **Questions:**
- Sarah Smith, Chair of Hope Select Board spoke – She stated it is vital for all communities to have internet access. We need the global reach for economic opportunities in this area.
- Commission Meriwether stated we are **NO WHERE** near how we will allocate the funds at this time; we will not make a final decision today. The list of priorities from the Guidance for the American Rescue Plan – 1<sup>st</sup> Support the Public Health Response, 2<sup>nd</sup> Address Negative Economic Impacts, 3<sup>rd</sup> Replace Public Sector Revenue Loss, 4<sup>th</sup> Premium Pay for Central Workers, 5<sup>th</sup> Water, Sewer & Broadband Infrastructure. We are going to be very cautious and very careful; and not jumping to a commitment right away. Time is **not** of the essence for the County. She will address a couple initial concerns she has. In the guidance plan it says it's directed toward unserved and underserved households in Knox County. According to broadband now, in Knox County 98.9% of the County has access to 25 MB or greater download already. 94% have speeds up to 100 MB per second. The question is, if we already have 94% of the County being served by 100 MB per second then what is the value of going forward. Our priorities are to serve those vulnerable. We should really give to households that don't have that service instead of going all out.
- Commissioner Pohlman spoke and thanked all for the presentations. High speed internet is an essential service. We need to focus on how to best invest this money. Need to consider a variety of needs. She would like to see more presentations on how to invest the funds. Commissioner Pohlman would like possibly see a detailed business plan by the July Commission Meeting. (This should consist of financial projections, organizational structure etc.)
- Commissioner Pohlman & Commissioner Meriwether thanked all for the presentations.

#### IV. Public Comment

- One comment was sent via email to Administrator Hart:
  - 1) Email sent from Peter Lindquist:
 

Mr. Hart: What follows are comments to share at the Knox County Commission meeting Tuesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> 2021 – regarding the distribution of the American Rescue Plan monies/specifically for Camden to receive \$7.7 million dollars to support the creation of a multi-town broadband utility.

The area (Camden & a long list of regional towns) needs those funds in order to set-up the non-profit utility known as MidCoast Internet Development Corporation, who will then:

    - Create a community-owned regional high-speed Internet network by 2024
    - Establish an open-access network with multiple service providers
    - Be a model community-controlled enterprise for the State of Maine

The first industries that will benefit from this investment in our infrastructure are the patients & providers who will observe, treat and monitor via tele-medicine connections. Welcome to modern Maine!

I hope you can support this important use of those funds.

Regards,

Peter Lindquist  
Camden, Maine

## V. Consent Items

### 1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:

- i. Agenda - Non Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
- ii. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
- iii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of April 13, 2021.
- iv. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of May 11, 2021.
- v. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of May 28, 2021.
- vi. Warrants

### #1. Warrant Authorization for May 2021 in the amount of \$1,185,263.22.

Please find enclosed all of the background for this Warrant Authorization. The motion would be to approve the Warrant Authorization for May 2021 in the amount of \$1,185,263.22.

**(The notes for this section are more specific to explain what is needed from the Commission for wording of the motion and the vote needed. This is needed now that we are meeting virtually and will be required monthly going forward until such time we meet in person once again and then can sign the warrant and reserve authorizations.)**

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Approve the Warrant Authorization for May 2021 in the amount of \$1,185,263.22. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to approve the consent items 1-5 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman . A vote was taken with all in favor.*

## VI. Action Items

### 1. Act to Award the Bid for a Zero Turn Mower for Use by the Knox County Regional Airport.

The Maintenance Department spends a majority of their week in the spring, summer and fall mowing the large areas of grass on the airfield. The constant use of these machines leads to heavy wear and tear on the mowing equipment. One of the Airport's 2 zero-turn mowers is approximately 5 years old, and has become a maintenance nightmare. Due to the fact that the current zero-turn mower is propane powered, you need a special license to maintain it, and there is no one locally that can maintain it. The Airport has been hiring Nitco to maintain the machine, and they are out of Bath. The mower is no longer reliable, and is a constant struggle to start, and keep running. The current machine is also expensive, costing approximately \$70/day to operate. Using propane also requires staff to make trips daily to town to refill the propane tanks. The new mower will be diesel, and will be able to mostly maintained by the maintenance staff. A RFP was sent out to 3 vendors on May 17, 2021 with bids due back on June 1, 2021. We received one bid from Union Farm Equipment for a total price of \$15,899.00. Jeremy would recommend that the Commission award the bid to Union Farm Equipment in the amount of \$15,899.00.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Award the Bid for a Zero Turn Mower for Use by the Knox County Regional Airport. To Union Farm Equipment in the amount of \$15, 899.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

### 2. Act to Award the Bid for the Knox County Correctional Facility & Knox County Public Safety Building Paving Project.

Administrator Hart worked with the Sheriff, Jim Hagan, Leticia, and Gartley & Dorsky Engineering & Surveying on this Paving RFP Project. Two months was spent developing this very extensive paving RFP. Gartley & Dorsky created the Specifications and Plans. They e-mailed out the packets for this project on May 7, 2021 to nine (9) Paving & Earthwork Contractors. The project completion had a deadline of September 24, 2021 with a bid alternate of extending the deadline for the project completion date to June 25, 2022. Included is a copy of the Tabulation of Bids. This consists of 29 pages and the bids themselves are attached to the Tabulation of Bids. Crooker Construction, LLC's bid is based on a 2022 completion date only. Jake Barbour, Inc. (JBI) submitted a bid for both 2021 and 2022 completion dates with the same price and is the apparent low bidder.

The entire RFP was broken out into Project #'s, so we would be able to see what each project area cost as this is being funded from 2 budgets. \$174,618 was budgeted in the Capital portion of the Corrections Budget for paving, and \$15,000 in the Capital portion of the Building Maintenance – Public Safety Building Budget. The scope of the paving project was broadened once we really started looking at it, such as the culvert replacements, ADA complaint sidewalks, and thicker pavement. Administrator Hart is still obtaining clarification and information of these bids and also have spoken to Jim and the Sheriff. Andrew Hedrich of Gartley & Dorsky has been contacted and he has a few follow-up clarifications with JBI. A recommendation will be prepared for the meeting on Tuesday.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act to Reject all Bids for the lack of funding for the Knox County Correctional Facility & Knox County Public Safety Building Paving Project to Reject Both Bids Until Late Fall of 2021. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

3. **Act to Approve the Additional Payments Per Month for the Knox County Jail Inmate Medical Contract with QCCH in an Amount not to Exceed \$43,200.00**

This was a last minute agenda item. Extensive discussions with Peter Marchesi, Sheriff and Administrator Hart have taken place. As 120 days is being approached we had to make sure something was in place so we are in compliance.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act to Approve the Additional Payments Per Month for the Knox County Jail Inmate Medical Contract with QCCH in a Total Amount not to Exceed \$43,200.00 The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

## VII. Discussion Items

1. **APAC's Recommendation to Purchase Maintenance Equipment for Use by the Knox County Regional Airport.**

Jeremy Shaw showed pictures of some ditches and how vegetation moved from ditches. We do not have equipment to maintained steep banking's & other vegetation which is limited to growing 4 feet tall, and a lot has grown to 8 feet already. The current situation is we are unable to maintain the height of such vegetation due to the of lack of equipment. Right now this is limited to the liability, maintenance and who will use this piece of equipment. Commissioner Parent stated that the only thing that scares him about this purchase is that the CARES ACT money will not be here forever, and the piece of equipment will be; there will be a lifetime of maintenance which will be up to the County.

2. **Update on KCPSB Floor Repair Project.**

Repairs have not been made yet. We are working with Gartley & Dorskey currently. Administrator Hart and Jim Hagan have met with Town Manager, Tom Luttrell, and John Dutch, the Superintendent of Wastewater, and talked about what is going on. All agreed that John would come out and complete a dye test with Jim at both Shepard Storage and Harbor Hounds. This is due to we thought that both of their lines were coming into our main sewer line that goes to Park Street. The guide tests were done and neither line were going into our line. We then followed up with Bill Lane from Gartley & Dorskey and we have decided to do a design and plan. We are going to dig back to those two connections that come

in and try to figure out if those are actually capped. Then we will also have a clean out in that area so we don't have any further problems and it'll be fixe once and for all. We will have a new line come down that will come off in a "Y" and sweep into the actual sewer.

**3. Update of the Jail HVAC Project.**

Not a lot to report. Have second biweekly meeting on Thursday. Equipment has been ordered. We signed off on the option to move forward with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Phases, and are still waiting on the LOI for the 4<sup>th</sup> Phase from Siemens. Jim is doing a few repairs to keep things moving.

**4. Update on the Airport HVAC Project**

We did get price to get temporary chiller on a flatbed trailer, and waiting for billing information from Siemens. This will be approximately \$57K to get us through September until we can get the actual chiller on site.

**VIII. Other Business**

- Commissioner Meriwether asked about continuing with the Bicentennial Parade and getting the Lobster for it. Patrick Polky said he would make it work.
- Opioid Lawsuit status was discussed. The lawsuit is still ongoing and has not been settled. Administrator Hart stated that we are still receiving paperwork on this.
- Commissioner Pohlman has been reaching out to all the towns and Municipalities in her district to ask if they want her to attend a Select Board Meeting. She went yesterday to Vinalhaven and spoke to Town Manager Andrew, Fire Chief and the Interim EMS Director just to get ideas and see what they are thinking.
- Commissioner Pohlman would like to suggest going to two meetings per month to give more time to discuss items. Administrator Hart suggested that maybe we start this in the Fall even though we will be heavily into Budget.
- Commissioner Parent would prefer a "work session" in the evening rather than during the day for the \$7.7 million dollars. Administrator Hart agreed that we should have a separate meeting for this item. This \$7.7 million has created a lot of issues, concerns and a lot of heart ache.

**IX. Adjourn**

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

The regular meeting adjourned at 4:43 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on July 13, 2021**