

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – September 14, 2021 – 2:00 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, September 14, 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, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, Chris Lowden, Communications Director Robert Coombs, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, and Sheriff Tim Carroll and EMA Director Ray Sisk.

Others: CPA, Kellie Bowden, Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley, So. Thomaston Selectman Jeff Northgraves, Pen Bay Pilot Reporter Chris Wolfe, St. George EMS Director Amy Drinkwater, & Rockport Selectman Denise Munger.

Absent: *Chief Deputy Patrick Polky, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Jail Administrator Bob Wood, Register of Deeds Madalene Cole, and District Attorney Natasha Irving.*

Special Meeting – Agenda

Tuesday September 14, 2021 – 2:00 P.M.

- I. 2:00 Meeting Called to Order**
- II. 2:01 Presentation**
 1. Presentation of the Knox County Audit for the Year Ending December 31, 2020.
- III. 2:10 Public Comment -** Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.
- IV. 2:15 Consent Items**
 1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:
 - i. Agenda – Non-Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
 - ii. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of August 4, 2021.
 - iii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of August 10, 2021.
 - iv. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of September 1, 2021.
 - v. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - vi. Warrants.
 - vii. Reserve Withdrawals.
- V. 2:20 Action Items**
 - Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Execute the Consent and Assignment to Transfer Hangar #15 Lease from Cameron Lewis to Willard Hardy Jr. and Approve and Authorize the Chair to Execute the Request for Lease Assignment.
 - Act on Knox County Communications Association (KCCA) Retention Bonus to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds.
 - Act to Approve Revised Job Descriptions
 - a. Communications Director
 - b. Dispatch Supervisor
 - c. Dispatcher
 - d. Information Technology Director
 - e. Technical Support Specialist
 - Act on Amendment to the Position Classification & Salary Administration Policy.
 - Act to Approve the Commission Meeting Two Times Per Month.
- VI. 2:45 Discussion Items**
 1. Letter from the Town of South Thomaston – Knox County to Lead and facilitate Regionalization of Fire and EMS and Host a Meeting to Invite Interested Towns to Discuss This Matter.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. ARPA Funding Request Applications and Next Steps 3. Update on the KCPSB Floor Repair Project. 4. Updates on the Airport HVAC Project. 5. Update on the Correctional Facility HVAC Project. 6. Other
VII.	2:55	Other Business
VIII.	3:00	Executive Session
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene in Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A).
IX.		Action Items:
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act on Knox County Retention Bonus to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA Funds).
X.		Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

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

II. Presentation

1. Presentation of the Knox County Audit for the Year Ending December 31, 2019. – Kellie Bowden from James W. Wadman, C.P.A.

III. Public Comment – No comment

IV. 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 Special Commission Meeting of August 4, 2021.
 - iv. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of August 10, 2021.
 - v. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of September 1, 2021.
 - vi. Warrants
 - vii. Reserve Withdrawals
 - *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to approve the consent items as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

V. Action Items

1. **Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Execute the Consent and Assignment to Transfer Hangar #15 Lease from Cameron Lewis to Willard Hardy Jr. and Approve the Chair to Execute the Request for Lease Assignment.**
 Mr. Lewis has sold his hangar to Willard Hardy Jr. The sale has closed so the Consent Assignment document is required to transfer the lease agreement for the land the hangar sits on to Mr. Hardy Jr. This request is for the Commission to authorize the Chair to execute the consent and assignment document therefore approving transferring the lease agreement of the Hangar #15 lease as well as the request for lease assignment.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Execute the Consent and Assignment to Transfer Hangar #15 Lease from Cameron Lewis to Willard Hardy Jr. and Approve the Chair to Execute the Request for Lease Assignment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

2. Act on Knox County Communications Association (KCCA) Retention Bonus to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds.

The Commission approved a retention stipend of \$200/week for the Sheriff's Office, effective June 27, 2021 and to be paid on the next pay period. While management had originally planned to propose this retention stipend for positions covered by FOP, the Sheriff ultimately recommended, and the Commissioners approved, the retention stipend for all employees in the Sheriff's Office. Administrator Hart received an e-mail from the KCCA President on June 30, 2021 regarding authorizing the retention stipend for Communications under the Knox County Communications Association. They would receive the same \$200.00 per pay period that was approved and allocated to both Corrections and the Sheriff's Office. This was discussed with the Commission at their July 13, 2021 regular meeting with no action taken. Dispatch has been dealing with turnover, vacancies, and trying to retain existing employees for many years and this is still an issue during these times. Administrator Hart would recommend that the Commission approve this retention stipend for Communication Employees.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act on Knox County Communications Association (KCCA) Retention Bonus of \$200.00 per pay period retroactive to start May 30, 2021, to be Applied to all Communications Personnel, and to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds Designated as Premium Pay for Essential Workers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *A motion was withdrawn by Commissioner Meriwether to Act on Knox County Communications Association (KCCA) Retention Bonus of \$200.00 per pay period as it should state per week. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act on Knox County Communications Association (KCCA) Retention Bonus of \$200.00 per week retroactive to start May 30, 2021, to be Applied to all Communications Personnel, and to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Fund Designated as Premium Pay for Essential Workers. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

3. Act to Approve Revised Job Descriptions.

There are five (5) marked up job descriptions from Administration/IT and Communications in the Commissioner's packets for review. They are Communications Director, Dispatch Supervisor, Dispatcher, Information Technology Director, and Technical Support Specialist. All changes are shown in red-strikeout and red underline or blue strike-out and blue underline. Administrator Hart will provide additional information at the meeting.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve Revised Job Descriptions. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

4. Act on Amendment to the Position Classification & Salary Administration Policy.

Attached are marked up versions of the Position Classification & Salary Administration Policy. The management team feels that we need to make two enhancements to the Position Classification and Salary Administration Policy, due to the extremely competitive labor market and increasing compensation rates:

1. Changing the timing of the first Step increase for new employees hired on our after July 1st to 6 months from the date of hire (vs. having to wait, in some cases, a year and a half).

2. Changing the timing of the effective date for Position Reclassifications to the first full pay period after approval (vs. the prior January 1st for those approved in the first 6 months of the calendar year, or the following January 1st for those approved in the last 6 months of the year.

These changes will allow increases to take place quicker than in the past and should help with retention in the cases where they apply.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act on Amendment to the Position Classification & Salary Administration Policy. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Meriwether. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

5. **Act to Approve the Commission Meeting Two Times Per Month.**

The Commission had discussed and previously requested about meeting two times per month. The Charter indicates that for Regular Meetings that the Commission shall meet regularly at least once each month. The Commission can therefore approve to meet more than once per month.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act to Approve the Commission Meeting Two Times Per Month to the fourth Tuesday of the month at 2:00 P.M. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

VI. Discussion Items:

- **Letter from the Town of South Thomaston – Knox County to Lead and Facilitate Regionalization of Fire and EMS and Host a Meeting to Invite Interested Municipalities to Discuss This Matter.**
 - Jeff Northgraves, So. Thomaston Selectman spoke. We looked at steps for regionalization. Several efforts to address regionalization in the EMS world. Looking for Knox County to lead the effort and start us on that path to regionalization.
 - Amy Drinkwater spoke briefly.
 - Chief Farley spoke. Every community will not be able to support the way things are now forever. No one knew about the letter from So. Thomaston, and said all the Towns/City should all be working together. Before we move forward we need to get expectations for each Town/Island community. It needs to be inclusive to all. Chief Farley stated that people are asking what is Knox County bringing to the table, in terms of how to deliver Fire and EMS change.
 - Commissioner Meriwether stated she did not foresee Knox County taking over/ leading. The County has money and the use of a big meeting room that can be used readily, and that may be the extent of the County's role. She sees the adaptation of a County Regional Fire/EMS Coordinator happening. There more of an emergent need in EMS than Fire.
 - Commissioner Pohlman asked if EMS discussions should be separate from Fire.
 - Chief Farley said they should be together and Amy Drinkwater agreed.
 - Commissioner Parent said he can visualize regionalization, but cannot imagine them getting together to buy equipment.
 - Commissioner Pohlman mentioned that in the letter from So. Thomaston they asked to take some ARPA funds to fund some of the regionalization. She stated that EVERYONE has to be willing to participate before that can be talked about.
 - Ray Sisk talked about procuring Neil Courtney. Perhaps the County pays for Neil Courtney services by updating the report. Once you have the buy in at the Town level then you can expand the discussion. This just seems the right thing to do.
 - Commissioner Pohlman suggested the need to poll each Town and Island to find out specific needs.

- Commissioner Meriwether stated at this point there really isn't a place for the County to step in. She agrees with Commission Pohlman that the Towns and Islands need to take a poll .
- Jeff Northgraves stated that the letter was the first step to start the regionalization discussion. We want the County to reserve some funds for this effort. He believes there is a role for the County. The letter is just asking for the County to set aside some ARPA funds for this purpose.
- Commissioner Meriwether is not willing to say yes the County is going to step in and assist with regionalization. She stated that EMS and Fire is a municipal responsibility. So far, So. Thomaston is the only Town they have heard from.
- Administrator Hart asked the participants of the Commission Meeting if we should we reach out to Neil Courtney, get a revised proposal, obtain the cost to redo the Fire and EMS, then let us know when you need us. Once we get the information back from Neil we will get it out to you. The County will consider paying for the revised proposal from Neil Courtney if we have the money at that point.
- **ARPA Funding Request Applications and Knox County Departmental ARPA Funds Requests and Next Steps.**
 - Provided with a spreadsheet to the Commissioners with the ARPA requests. Received a little over 35 requests totaling a little over 13 million. We've committed some of the money already and have a few other things we're getting pricing on. We have received 3.5 million so far. Commissioners need to decide what the next step will be. Need to see what will be done for Department requests first, and then use what's left for Municipalities. When we started this we did not think we needed someone to oversee it, but now we do due to the amount of requests. We reached out to Waldo and Lincoln County to see if they could give us a name of someone who might be a possibility to help with the ARPA process.
 - Commissioner Pohlman is happy to hear will be looking at hiring a Consultant to help with the process. We have 3 separate groups applying for the ARPA funds. The groups applying are Knox County Departments, Towns & Municipalities and Non-Profit organizations. This would be helpful having them all separated/broken down as to what they are requesting.
 - Commissioner Meriwether state that we are still in agreement about still meeting with Municipalities. It is opportunities to sit down together and come to some agreements on what priorities are. Priorities for the money are supposed to go those most affected by the pandemic.
 - Commissioner parent agrees that a Consultant is needed.
 - Administrator Hart talked about hiring someone on an hourly basis. He is not committed to making this a full time position at this point. He wanted to know how the Commissioner feel because there's a lot to this process.
 - Commissioner Parent agrees with Administrator Hart. He stated that before we can reject any of these requests we need to get some expertise to look everything over.
 - Commissioner Pohlman stated that the ARPA money is really intended to address Covid-19 ramifications for helping the underserved and unserved is a high priority.
 - Finance Director Robinson stated that the list that was pulled together is really a summary list. The next step is to truly break it down by category, by project, and by providing more details so then it can be sorted however it makes sense for the three Commissioners to look at. That way it may flush out some categories that need to be dropped off the list. If it makes things easier it can be prioritized by categories of interest, and what categories that truly meet the criteria. There is a benefit to looking at legal assistance, and a firm that deals specifically with ARPA funds relating to different agencies so they know the ins and outs, they have already done the research. There is definitely a benefit of us looking at that, versus hiring someone that's a consultant that is good with projects but doesn't know anything about the ARPA funds. The right fit is very important and she feels she would push towards that the person is not an

employee of ours, but they are an independent contractor, a consultant, they are a lawyer. If we are going with a firm then there are resources associated with that versus a person.

- Selectmen Northgraves stated they are just looking for a timeline for the funds, because they have deadlines as well.
 - Commissioners decided to wait to make further discussion on ARPA until later date.
 - Sheriff stated to be aware that the Budget Committee may have a problem with the decisions the Commissioners make on allocating the ARPA funds. The Budget Committee does not have a “say” in how the funds are allocated, but may have strong suggestions for Knox County.
 - The intent of ARPA is NOT about reducing taxes.
 - Commissioners will come in individually to view the applications, and also hire a consultant to help with the process. This will be on the next agenda.
- **Update on the KCPSB Floor Project.**
 - Administrator Hart stated painting & flooring done in all of EMA & almost all flooring in Sheriff’s Office. At the end of August a mold issue was discovered in the Sheriff’s Office. Had to call ServPro on September 2nd, and had them look at the area. They suggested hiring a Micro Biologist to assist. Air Quality Management Services was also brought in last week. They started in the Sheriff’s Office and took samples and pictures. They also checked over EMA and Dispatch center. A few isolated issues were found in EMA & nothing in Dispatch. There will be a full written report in 10/15. At his point don’t know what well do. Administrator Hart filed a third claim. Malcom Ulmer with Risk Pool initially he said no they would not entertain a claim, once we started to submit more material he went back on that and now he’s changed his tune.
 - **Update on the Airport HVAC Project.**
 - Things are moving along swiftly.
 - **Update on the Correctional Facility HVAC Project.**
 - Piping, duct work, all equipment needed is on site. Condensing units are on roof but not hooked up. All old heat coil units are out and piping is decommissioned.

VII. Other Business:

- SHAPE recertification occurred on August 16th. Safety Works (Sam Knight) met with Shane Riley, Ray Sisk, Candice Richards, Administrator Hart & Jim Hagan. He was impressed with what we had available. There are only some minor things to correct. The Sheriff’s Office, EMA & the Courthouse had no corrections to make.
- Administrator Hart stated that Knox County should have SHAPE recertification for 3 years. Everyone in each Department did an excellent job. We will see a savings on Workers Comp. premiums.
- Scheduled a meeting with Unions for negotiations.
- The Budget Committee Meeting will be held Thursday, September 16, 2021, in the Jury Assembly room in the Courthouse at 5:00 P.M.

VIII. Executive Session:

1. Convene in Executive Session to discuss a Personnel Matter pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A).

IX. Action Item:

1. Act on Knox County Retention Bonus to be Funded Through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Act to Move to Approve Premium Bonuses of \$200.00 Per Week Retroactive to June 27, 2021 to be Applied to Two (2) EMA Employees and Two (2) IT Employees. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

X. 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 5:53 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on October 12, 2021.