

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Friday – October 14, 2022 – 9:00 A.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Friday, October 14, 2022, 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 Patrick Polky, Deputy Chief Deputy Dwight Burtis, Captain Paul Pinkham, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Corrections Administrator Robert Wood, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, EMA Director Candice Richards, IT Director Zach Greene, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Communications Director Robert Coombs, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley and Maintenance Manager James Hagan.

Absent: District Attorney Natasha Irving

Special Meeting – Agenda **Friday – October 14, 2022 – 9:00 A.M.**

- I. 9:00 Meeting Called To Order**
- II. 9:01 Discussion Item**
 - Review of the 2023 Knox County Budget Draft.
- III. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Meriwether called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 9: 07 A.M.

Administrator Harts General Overview of the 2023 Proposed Budget:

- CPI for August 2022 is 8.6599%. The Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the 2022 Budget was 5.83% as compared to 1.39% in the 2021 Budget.
- FICA is set at 7.65% of the wages.
- Health Insurance is calculated with a 8.00% increase.
- Worker’s Compensation is calculated with a 10.00% increase. The Risk Pool Assessment is calculated with a 10.00% increase.
- The retirement program includes the actual plan participation.
- Resignation/Termination Benefits include sick leave payments for those that have an excess of 90 sick days by the end of the year.
- The 2023 total Budget shows a \$1,534,543 (17.68%) increase for the County tax portion and \$208,506 (16%) increase for the Communications' Budget which is an assessment.
- The 2023 proposed Tax Assessment is \$10,360,228, Dispatch Assessment fee is \$1,485,714, 2022 Tax Assessment was \$8,807,500 and the Dispatch Assessment fee was \$1,277,209. The 2022 figure utilized \$200,000 in Undesignated Fund Balance to reduce the 2022 Tax Assessment figure. The 2023 figure proposes to utilize \$475,000 in Undesignated Fund Balance to reduce the 2023 Tax Assessment figure.
- There are six (6) major reasons for this increase:
 - 1) Increase in Personnel Services in all departments based on wage increase.
 - 2) Projected increases in Health Insurance premium and also changes in participation.
 - 3) \$272,088 increase in the Building Maintenance – Courthouse Budget, which includes increases in Electricity, Cleaning & Building Maintenance Contracts. \$244,733 increase in Capital Projects for Exterior Masonry Repair for the East and South Elevations, Replacement Phone System, and HVAC upgrade for the Administrative Offices and Commissioner’s Hearing Room.

- 4) \$108,237 increase in the EMA Budget. This is because of a major decrease in EMPG Funding due to being cut by the State.
- 5) \$323,855 increase in the Sheriff's Office Budget. This includes a \$488,525 increase in Sheriff's Office Personnel Services including wages and benefits, restructuring of some positions and a new 25 hrs. /week Civil Process Officer. A \$60,124 increase in Contractual Services.
- 6) \$810,844 increase in the Corrections Budget. This includes a \$483,826 increase in the Corrections Personnel Services including wages and benefits. A \$228,475 increase in Contractual Services. A \$52,100 increase in Capital Projects.

II. 2023 Budget Review - Department Managers:

- **District Attorney's Office: pg.15-16**
 - **Lodging** – is up quite a bit, but an artificial increase. The way we've been traveling and sharing rooms has changed. This month going to Prosecutors Conference which we have not done in three (3) years.
 - **Training, Seminar & Conference** - We saved a bit of money when we went from JPMA to Dirigo.
 - Workstations are up as we are on a rotation where do not replace all each year.
 - **Revenue** has changed – seeing things such as copy budget where we used to be able to charge for second sets of Discovery and now we can no longer charge as often. We are being forced by the Court to provide the second sets without charging. Differed Dispositions revenue is down. If someone goes through the
 - **Drug Analysis** – We used to be able to ask for reimbursement for this. In 2021 was law change where the wording changed. Previously we could request restitution for critical investigative expenses.
 - **DA Grant** is still the same. For a while we were doing quarterly invoices, and then it moved to monthly, and recently switched back to quarterly. Haven't received grant money since May.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** – Are the Courts getting caught up?
 - **Shane Riley** - Slow but sure and very busy.

- **Deeds: pgs. 13-14**
 - **Computer Supplies** – We need to replace one (1) computer as it is 8-10 years old.
 - **Revenue** – Sales of real estate have slowed but still collect a fair amount of tax
 - **Fees** – With interest rates being higher this year, there were 500 less mortgages in 2022, and people were not refinancing. Hoping interest rates will drop next year.
 - **Capital** – Indexing of the project which does not cost the County anything. This comes from the surcharge we collect on each recording.

- **Probate – Elaine Hallett: pg. 23-24**
 - **Postage** – This line is up because of all the Passports that have been doing.
 - **Revenue** – This line is up due to the amount of Passports and fees collected.

- **Finance – Kathy Robinson: pg 19-20**
 - The Deputy Finance Director will be retiring next year. This will be a significant loss.

- **Computer Repairs & Maintenance** - Addition of time and attendance program – track timesheets would like to automate this service. It is \$27,000 to put this into place. This would be in addition to MUNIS system. If do not do this in 2023 will need to wait for a couple years due to will have a new staff in the Finance office. The \$26,600 is to implement the time & attendance, and a good chunk is the education. This will involve each department. The ongoing maintenance is \$10,000 per year. This would be beneficial to Knox County and would like to put this thru to ARPA. In 2024 this will increase the Budget \$10,000 per year. Had a discussion with Sheriff and Communications Director they both agreed it would be beneficial. This will also integrate with MUNIS for timesheets.
- **Computer** purchases throughout departments should go to ARPA list as they are a one (1) time purchase. This cost is around \$33,000.
- **Finance Director Robinson** – stated on the five (5) year Capital plan the Airport Capital projects would stay because they have their own funding source. The Courthouse other than the lease purchases the other three (3) items would come off and go on an ARPA list, the Building Maintenance/Public Safety phone system would go on the ARPA list, Corrections phone system would go on the ARPA list, but not their new vehicle because that’s funding a reserve account.
- **Administrator Hart** suggested where we’re asking to place the \$72,350 for exterior masonry work on the Courthouse in 2023 on the ARPA list. In 2024 we are going to have the last elevation and would it make sense to add that in at the same time?
- **Finance Director Robinson** – We could add it to the list and make a note that the \$72,350 was intended to do in 2023, and then list the other separately. So if the Commission or Budget Committee feels the ARPA list is too high or don’t want to do it they can easily take out one portion and not the other.

- **MISC – pg. 27**
 - **Debt Service** is the payment for PSB and Communications building/upgrade will be paid off in 2027.
 - **Planning & Economic** – We agreed to the four (4) we have been previously funding. We had two (2) additional businesses ask for funding. One for \$5,000 and \$140,000. We need to be careful about funding additional ones but then everyone will expect to be funded. This will be up to the Commission & Budget Committee to decide on if they get funded or not.
 - **Insurance** – We budgeted 10% but we will not know the final number until November.

- **KRCC – Robert Coombs: pg. 31-32**
 - **Retirement** – KRCC has an employee (Supervisor) with the longest amount of years retiring in 2023.
 - **Advertising** – We have seen a big increase as we are constantly advertising.
 - **Equipment, Repairs & Maintenance** – This increased due to had to work out an agreement with recorder people. (The new recorder is now in place.)
 - **Audit line** – This could fluctuate depending on if we hire a new firm.
 - **Finance Director Robinson** - If the firm we used in the past agrees to come back, then anyone that has an Audit account the amount will go down. She was assuming a 50% increase we had to bring in a new firm. If the Auditors come back they are looking for a more relaxed time frame.
 - **Capital** – We didn’t put anything in. Hopefully everything will be up to speed. Just replaced the new microwave system, replace all console radios.
 - We are currently down six (6) Dispatchers and one (1) Supervisor. People that are applying and having trouble with housing and background checks. We are not law enforcement, but have the same standards as they do. Actively looking to fill all those positions. Sometimes

Director Coombs is on one (1) day a week Dispatching. Call volume will be about same as last year as will the Budget for KRCC.

- **EMA – Candice Richards: pg 16-17**
 - Revenue is down by 59%. We have no control over this. EMPG is the Emergency Management Performance Grant and reimburses us for 50% of our expenses. The State rearranged the amount of funding. The amount we are getting in start of October \$74,000 compared to getting \$130,000-\$140,000. This will not cover 50% for entire year, and we will run out by the end of the year. A request can be made for additional funding but there is no guarantee.
 - Restructured the EMPG on population instead of performance. There have been major issues in MEMA so all Counties are seeing problems. We have not received any reimbursements since July. We are still owed reimbursement money. All Counties are pretty frustrated with this.
 - **Auto Repairs/Maintenance** - We have a second vehicle which came from Sheriff's Department. We have two (2) vehicles now. Will have to replace the truck by next year. Getting an RFP together to put out to bid for a new vehicle.
 - **Training/Conferences** – additional training for GIS due to newer GIS technology. ESRI does GIS training.
 - **Gas** – We are still using Zoom quite a bit instead of traveling, so not using as much gas.
 - **Computer Supplies & Equipment**– We need to replace one (1) desk top and one(1) lap top. We do a lot of remote work thus having a doc to take home computer/laptop this way will have remote access.
 - Homeland Security Grants (*Federal Grants*) have seen a shift in what they want to pay for. Now, they want you to have a project with a start and a finish. The software for the digital sign we have has been covered by Homeland Security in the past and the last year they will pay will be in 2023.
 - Andy Germann's position is fully funded by Homeland Security currently. This will be changing as they will not fund this. This position may be moved into EMA Budget in the future.

- **Admin. & IT – Zach Greene: pgs. 8-9**
 - **Personnel** – There will be a new HR position. We need a full time person to benefit the whole County. The new person would take on some things that we have moved. We have moved benefits/administration to Finance; we had done an ORG study and eliminated the Executive Assistant position in Admin. The Sheriff had asked for an Accreditation Training Manager which was discussed amongst the Position Classification Committee and we actually developed a job description. During the Budget process asked the Sheriff what if we forego that for a year and have the new HR person take it over, then reevaluate in 2024. The new HR would also take on the WC & FOA requests. The WC will also be handed to HR. \$61,080 is just the wage not including benefits for the new HR employee.
 - **Finance Director Robinson** – If we find the HR salary is not high enough we will come to the Commission to see where we can cut from, and if that does not work then can pull from Undesignated Fund Balance.
 - **Labor Relations** – We have bumped this up to fifteen (15) due to all contracts expire in 2023. All Unions are not easy to work with, so we will incur legal expenses. Airport's Labor Relations would be reimbursed through CARES.
 - **Legal** – We lowered it a little bit. The major components have been the Jail. (Jail has their own Legal line)
 - **Telephone and Pagers** –We have redone the contract.
 - **Computer Repairs & Maintenance** – Spillman is the increase.
 - **Recognition** – This line is up due to we looked at the whole way people are being recognized.

- **Maintenance – Jim Hagan – Courthouse - pgs. 9-10**
 - **Cleaning** – This line is up a bit trying because has been trying to recruit, and trying to keep employees. They have to pass background check and be exposed to COVID every day. They are short about two (2) people. Working at the Airport entails seven (7) days a week, and two (2) times a day cleaning. The main problem is wages. Jim’s company is still \$10,000-\$11,000 lower than 2021 bid. A big part of the increase is Insurance and Workers Comp.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** – When it comes time to talk to the Budget Committee she’s asking for the figure for the year before Jim started.
 - **Maintenance** – This increased due to need pay for hiring a Maintenance Manager.
 - **Electrical** – These prices are way up from Vendors.
 - **Propane** – This went down to \$1.66 and is good until May 2023. (*We are locked in*)
 - **HVAC** – Lease purchase payments will be paid off in two (2) more Budgets.
 - **Masonry** – East and South elevations were done. The back of the building was done last year. We discussed last year that we were going to complete East and South elevations. You have to do caulking each year to keep up with it. This is just upkeep.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** – Do we have an actual figure for the Appropriations increase?
 - **Administrator Hart** – 17% that takes in account for Surplus of \$475,000.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** – So the proposed amount to the Taxpayer is 17%, right?
 - **Finance Director Robinson** – Yes.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** – Something has to come out of this Budget.
 - **Administrator Hart** is willing to sacrifice the \$176,000 for the building upgrade HVAC.
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** does not want anything based on one (1) Commissioners opinion.
 - **Commissioner Pohlman** thinks should leave it in the proposed Budget and discuss with the Budget Committee.
 - **Commissioner Parent** – Thinks the longer you put something off the more it’s going to cost.
 - **Finance Director Robinson** suggested we take out onetime Capital items in the Budget, and place these on the ARPA list. At this point the Consultant cost has been minimal. \$200,000 is set aside and right now we still have \$800,000 to work with. \$800,000 is Undesignated.

- **Maintenance– Jim Hagan – Public Safety - pg. 11**
 - **Cleaning** – There was 10% increase due to seven (7) day a week cleaning needed and employees need to pass a criminal background check. Wages, cleaning supplies and equipment are all factors to the increase.
 - **Electric Repair/Maintenance** – The cost for things are expensive and he is trying to do as much as he can to keep costs low. “Not to exceed” pricing is a nice guarantee to have from a Vendor.
 - **Administrator Hart** – He does not foresee anything else major happening, so he feels the amount in the Budget is a fair number.
 - **Heating fuel** – This went to \$3.75 per gallon.

- **Knox County Regional Airport – Jeremy Shaw: pg. 28**

- **Airport Manager** - Completed quite a few projects this year. Right now we are very well positioned to go into the period in 2024. We are generating more revenue than we are spending. A lot of that is due to the Solar project that is coming up next year.
- **Consulting** – Once we have a full time consultant then will eliminate this line all together. We have not used it this year so will reduce from \$5,000 to \$2,500.
- **Legal** – working on litigation in Superior Court right now for an Appeal on projects. Will have a bunch of new Hangar leases, new Terminal lease, and the Benner Lane property. We are at \$38,000 to date so far.
- **Internet/Webhosting** – We pay \$1,700 per month to provide internet for the Airport. The reason why we have this band width is because we are doing things for Dispatch, EMA, several communities are using our GIS services so to have this available for all these entities we wanted to try the fiber network. Zach is working on a better option for us, and so that number should drop significantly in 2024.
- **Electricity** – HVAC has been higher in energy cost both in fuel and electricity. We are projecting in 2023 we will see a lower cost. The HVAC was sold as being more efficient. The following year should have Solar up so there will be no cost. We did convert from oil to
- **Rubbish and Shredding** – The chemicals being used in this firefighting foam that was manufactured prior to 1195, contained high levels of very toxic materials. Right now there are very limited options of how to get rid of it. We have large plastic containers of it, (PFAS/ARRF), and it has to be disposed of through Clean Harbors. This is very expensive.
- **Computer Repairs/Maintenance** – Our gatekeeper system that we do all of our inspection on. The firewall is now \$2,363 for the Airport as in the past there was no cost.
- **Heating Repairs/Maintenance** – Siemens contract is now \$13,154/per year to maintain the system. This is a two (2) year contract.
- **Gas** – All Airport vehicles are diesel now.
- **Capital** – A new phone system is recommended by IT County wide. We requested a steam cleaner, snow pusher for loader are looking to obtain a new one, adding an additional gate – currently the Airport has twenty-six (26) access points. On the west side, the Transportation Museum is putting in a new road to access the Airport so we will be supplying a new gate around the Airport perimeter fence. Hydro seeding trailer – (CARES Act purchase) Almost every job at Airport has to do with hydro seeding.
- **Revenue** – Operations Facility rent projected at \$37,000 this year. The full potential revenue for the Benner Lance property is \$65,000. Budget percentage is going through the roof as Year to date we have generated \$58,000 in revenue due to rental cars are going like crazy.
- **Penobscot Island Air** rent projecting \$25,000 with the new construction should be a significant increase. Cape Air is paying more to the Airport for electricity. **Vehicle Parking** is down due to people are not flying as much right now. **Landing fees** – \$11,343 that does not include July, August or September.

- **Sheriff's Department/Patrol – Sheriff & Chief Dwight Burtis: pgs. 25-26**
 - **Wages** – splitting out the Administrative Assistants role with Civil Process Supervisor - just changing duties.
 - **Civil Process** – 25 hours a week – this would be per diem this way. The Civil Process Deputy could be called in if a huge influx of paperwork that needed to be taken care of.
 - **Resignations / terminations** – expecting one retirement thus the increase. If they've been a long term employee can be a large payout
 - **Dues/Memberships** – the increase is due to us wanting to do accreditation. This is a very expensive process.
 - **Training/ Seminars/Conferences** – the biggest increase is law enforcement. It is \$40,000 to buy them out from another agency if they come to work for us. If an employee goes to the

Academy (which we pay for) and leave for another law enforcement job, then the other police force would have to reimburse us or vice versa. In the past we have used reserve money for this.

- **Canine medical** – our canine has had some allergies and had to go the vet more often.
 - **Tasers** – all of our Tasers have expired and have not received the quote from TASER yet. Right now if something goes wrong with a Taser, we will not be supported if there is litigation.
 - **Computer Supplies** – We have the regular replacement cycle with three (3) laptops and one (1) PC per year. The cost of laptops has increased significantly. We have tried to budget for replacement parts.
 - **Vehicles** are at \$0. We purchased these ahead and should be delivered by end of the month.
 - **Civil Process Fees** – we separate out two different fee processes – there is a fee that County Commissioners receive for every Civil Process and there is a fee that the Sheriff receives. The average paper served will be between \$80-\$100 of revenue. This is still an increase overall because of the States increase change.
-
- **Corrections – Robert Wood & Chief Patrick Polky: pg. 20-22**
 - Sheriff stated we are slightly over the cap, and the Medical contract is significantly higher. This has not been finalized.
 - **Diversion Deputy** will have ability to proceed with the new position with Commissioner approval in this 2023 Budget. Finance Director Robinson has estimated a Feb./Mar. start date so that would give us time to advertise and get the new person in that role.
 - We are changing out our educational provider. MCST is no longer able to access some grant funding for education purposes, so we are working with RSU 13 and Adult Ed throughout Knox County. We are waiting on finalizing the contract then we will have a number.
 - **Meals, Lodging & Travel** – the Academy is no longer doing overnight housing except for the Police Academy. All Corrections training will have to have travel now. There is limited Correctional training outside of the Basic training, so now will have to have some of this out of state. We have had to forecast for three (3) roundtrip airfares to get the staff to those.
 - **Fuel** is up a little. We are locked into a contract at 100K for the year for heating fuel. This does also include the generator and a few smaller items. We are locked in from October 2022 thru May 2023 at \$3.755.
 - **Advertising** – we are still having a huge problem recruiting. For Corrections it is extremely poor. This is a national problem. We are ten (10) short in Corrections right now. Pay is not necessarily the issue. Until people are willing to work again, we are all dealing with the shortage of employees. One of the challenges in Corrections is the cap.
 - **Computer Repairs and Maintenance** – Minuteman is our multipurpose vendor. They have changed hands over the years. They complete door improvements, control panels and over see fire alarm system. We had to update a few items thus the increase in this line.
 - **Seminars and Conferences** – it shows a 0% because we haven't had a Budget for this in the past. One of our strategies is we are trying to find people that are already certified.
 - **Computer Supplies & Equipment** – This is a very large increase. We have had to replace/upgrade laptops and PCs this year. We try to replace a couple each year which helps to stay on top of technology changes.
 - **Office Supplies & Equipment** – our conference room is falling apart. So looking to update with new tables, chairs and some other office items such as computer desks and chairs.
 - **Revenue** – Community Corrections which is part of the statutory change gave more funding. we are receiving \$600,000-\$800,000 from the State to help supplement some of the Community Corrections. We have a contract with Waldo county will expire in October
 - **Commissioner Meriwether** stated the Legal is at \$30,000 and she feels this seems low. Based on trend from years past.

- **Administrator Hart** stated legal is a flip of a coin; it's really hard to judge. Things come up that are unexpected.
- **Commissioner Meriwether** asked if there were any problems with housing.
- **Sheriff** stated that is the number one problem. We've had several out of state potentials (5) and only one has found housing.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** stated we have talked about Diversion Deputy in the past can we use ARPA funds for this? Is there any way to have the information and what the importance of this job, how it will benefit and offset some of the stresses that are occurring on the staff. Is there a way to get the information to the Budget Committee? Can we get the job description to them prior to the meeting? This way they are well appraised.
- **Commissioner Meriwether** stated initially the Budget Committee was not in favor of using ARPA funds.
- **5 Year Capital Plan** – We are looking at tank reclamation. A Reserve account was set up to offset the cost for this to change over of the generator, and entire heating system. The current underground tank has to be out by 2030.

Airport Security – Sheriff & Chief Deputy Dwight Burtis: pg. 31

- **Advertising** for a new hire to replace Mike Wayland who was the Airport Security Deputy.
- **Overtime** has been high – in the summertime there are more flights and more help is needed. Primary function is to be there for the screening of passengers. The position is one (1) 30 hour and one (1) 40 hour. These positions will be supervised by a Patrol Supervisor. The Deputy would have four (4) 10 hour shifts.
- **Contract** renews in November and increasing the Cape Air Security Fee to from \$6,500 to \$10,500/per month. This would be a little over \$100,000 per year.
- **Health Insurance** – not sure if the New Hire will decline the health insurance. This number takes in account for the fulltime and part-time employee.
- **Training** – going to try to send both employees to training on Airport Security and Law Enforcement functions. This is highly recommended training but not mandatory.
- **Uniforms** – Where the employee is a New Hire we will have to outfit them with bullet proof vest.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Net increase is at 0?
- **Airport Manager Shaw** – Cares Act is covering this. This goes until May 2024.

III. Adjourn

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

The meeting adjourned at 1:03 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on November 8, 2022.