

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – January 11, 2022 – 2:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022, 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, Chief Deputy Patrick Polky, Systems Administrator Mike Dean, EMA Director Ray Sisk and Human Resources Laurie Bouchard

Absent: *Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Bob Wood, and District Attorney Natasha Irving*

Regular Meeting – Agenda

Tuesday – January 11, 2022 – 2:00 P.M.

- I. 2:00 Meeting Called to Order**
- II. 2:01 Public Comment** - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.
- III. 2:05 Election of Officers**
 1. Elect Chair for 2022.
 2. Elect Vice-Chair for 2022.
 3. Elect Representative for 2022 to:
 - i. CCWI
 - ii. Union Negotiations
 - iii. Airport Public Advisory Committee
 - iv. MCEDD/MCOG
 - e. Strategic Planning Committee
- IV. 2:10 Consent Items**
 1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:
 - i. Agenda – Non-Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
 - ii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of December 14, 2021.
 - iii. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of December 28, 2021.
 - iv. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - v. Warrants.
 - vi. Reserve Withdrawals.
- V. 2:15 Action Items**
 1. Act on Interest to be Charged to Municipalities on 2021 Dispatch Fees Paid Late.
 2. Act to Award Bids for Three (3) New Vehicles and One (1) New or Used vehicle for Use by the Sheriff’s Department.
 3. Act to Approve the Purchase of Meeting Owl for Use in Meetings.
- VI. 2:35 Discussion Items**
 1. Update on the KCPSB Floor Repair Project.
 2. Updates on the Airport HVAC Project.
 3. Update on the Correctional Facility HVAC Project.
 4. Discussion of Providing Health Benefits to County Commissioners.
 5. Other
- VII. 2:55 Other Business**

VIII. Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Parent called the regular meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:17 P.M.

II. Public Comment

Commissioner Chair Meriwether asked if there was any public comment.
There was none.

III. Election of Officers

1. Elect Chair for 2022

- Commissioner Parent nominated Commissioner Meriwether to serve as Commission Chair for 2021. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both in favor. **(Commissioner Meriwether took over the meeting as newly elected Chair.)**

2. Elect Vice-Chair for 2022

- Commissioner Parent nominated Commissioner Pohlman to serve as Commission Vice Chair for 2021. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both favor.

3. Elect Representative to MCEDD, CCWI, Union Negotiations, and APAC for 2021

- *Commissioner Meriwether nominated Commissioner Parent to serve as Commission Representative to CCWI for 2022. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both in favor.*
- *Commissioner Pohlman nominated Commissioner Parent to serve as Commission Representative for Union Negotiations for 2022. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both in favor.*
- *Commissioner Parent nominated Commissioner Meriwether to serve as Commission Representative to the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC) for 2022. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both in favor*
- *Commissioner Parent nominated Commissioner Pohlman to serve as Commission Representative to the MidCoast Council of Governments (MCOG) for 2022. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the nomination. A vote was taken with both in favor.*
- *Commissioner Parent nominated Commissioner Pohlman to serve as Commission Representative to the Strategic Planning sub-Committee. Commissioner Meriwether seconded the motion. A vote was taken with both in favor*

The list as it stands for the 2022 year:

- MCOG - *Commissioner Pohlman*
- CCWI - *Commissioner Parent*
- Union Negotiations – *Commissioner Parent*
- APAC – *Commissioner Meriwether*
- Strategic Planning Sub-Committee – *Commissioner Pohlman*

IV. Consent Items**1. Approve Consent Items as Presented:**

- i. Agenda – Non-Agenda Items Only Permitted if Emergency in Nature.
- ii. Minutes of Regular Commission Meeting of December 14, 2021.
- iii. Minutes of Special Commission Meeting of December 28, 2021.
- iv. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to approve the consent items 1-3 as presented. Item #4 will be tabled until the June 8, 2021 Regular Commission Meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

#1. Warrant Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$1,173,666.57.

Please find enclosed all of the background for this Warrant Authorization. The motion would be to approve the Warrant Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$1,173,666.57.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Meriwether to Approve the Warrant Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$1,173,666.57. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

#2. Reserve Withdrawal Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$128,760.00.

Please find enclosed all of the background for this Reserve Withdrawal Authorization. The motion would be to approve the Reserve Withdrawal Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$128,760.00.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Approve the Reserve Withdrawal Authorization for April 2021 in the amount of \$128,760.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

V. Action Items**1. Act on Interest to be Charged Municipalities on 2021 Dispatch Fees Paid Late.**

This year there is one (1) municipality being charged interest in the amount of \$39.72 for paying their dispatch fees late: The Town of Owls Head. Finance Director Kathy Robinson has prepared an approval form, which the Commission will sign to approve so that the interest can be charged to the municipality. Administrator Hart has attached the spreadsheet that shows the amount of interest for the one municipality, and will be the document that the Commission will be signing.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act on Interest to be Charged Municipalities on 2021 Dispatch Fees Paid Late. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

2. Act to Award Bids for Three (3) New Vehicles and One (1) New or Used Vehicle for Use by the Sheriff's Department.

A RFP was sent out to for three (3) new vehicles and one (1) new or used vehicle to seven (7) vehicle vendors on Wednesday December 22, 2021. Bids were due back on Monday January 3, 2022 at 2:00 PM, at which time they were publicly opened. Two (2) vendors submitted bids. The bid results sheet is still being finalized and will be e-aimed to the Commission once it is finalized and in advance of Tuesday's Meeting. The Sheriff will be reviewing the bid results and will make recommendations of which vendor to award the bids to.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to award a bid to Quirk Chevrolet GMC of Rockland for one (1) GMC Terrain for a purchase price of \$33,759 and from Rockland Ford & Rockland Ford GMC (1) Ford F150 4X4 Super Crew K-9 Vehicle for \$49,999 and (2) Explorer Interceptor Police Vehicles for*

\$36,232.00 each, minus a trade in value of \$17,000; for a grand total of \$139,222 for vehicles to be used by the Sheriff's Department. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.

3. Act to Approve the Purchase of Meeting Owl for Use in Meetings

- Geoffrey Parker attended the meeting and talked about the Meeting Owl. He has set this up for South Thomaston. HE stated that to hear clearly a person can only be eight (8) feet away from the Owl.
- Commissioner Meriwether stated that the current situation is a camera that is fixed on the Commission. With the Owl it would focus on the person who is speaking. Something that costs less than \$1,000 is the way to go.
- Systems Administrator Dean stated he disagrees with the Owl but will do anything. The manufacturer states twelve (12) feet, but in actuality it is eight (8) feet or it will not work efficiently with our Town Hall Streams.
- Administrator Hart stated we will be holding ZOOM webinar meetings until further notice. No hybrid meetings or meeting in person until further notice. Not sure about using the Owl but depends on IT dept.
- Geoffrey Parker states that the reason you need to make a decision now is so we can get this moving and test it out. We want this process to be seamless. He can give more alternatives, but these tend to be more expensive. After hearing the dimensions of the room, he agrees with Systems Administrator Dean that this piece of gear will not be satisfactory for the meetings.
- Commissioner Meriwether stated we're set up fine for in person & remote meetings; we're just not ready for hybrid meetings.
- Airport Manger Shaw asked if this would be better for our conference room (at the Airport) where it's smaller. We do a lot of meetings with vendors and APAC. He stated that if it would work in the Airport space he would be interested in trying it out.
- Commissioner Pohlman said she agrees that the Owl might not be good for the Commissioners room? So what are other options?
- Systems Administrator Dean stated that we had a multimedia plan that would have been the first good step, but that was removed from the 2022 Budget. He reached out to Town Hall Streams to get better audio and video, now waiting for quote on that.
- Geoffrey Parker stated that has for these type of meetings you need to figure out how you want these set up, there are a lot of question. You need multiple cameras and good audio. There are a lot of options and level of quality. He would be happy to go to the Conference room and make suggestions.
- Administrator Hart wanted to bring this topic back in a meeting or two and discuss options and possibly take action.
- Commissioner Meriwether stated that communication is key is government. She would like a commitment to start working on this as soon as possible.
- *A motion was not made to Act to Approve the Purchase of Meeting Owl for Use in Meetings. The motion was not seconded. The motion did not pass. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

VI. Discussion Items

a. Update on the KCSPB Floor Repair Project.

Working with SERVPRO and Steamatic. Steamatic are working under SERVPRO to clean the vents and the duct work in the Public Safety Building. Steamatic is on schedule to start January 17-21st. SERVPRO will start the following Monday, on January 24th. SERVPRO will have the company that did the mold testing come in and do a follow up test to make sure we passed. If we do pass, then hopefully we can reoccupy that building 100%.

b. Updates on the Airport HVAC Project

We are where we were at the last meeting. Not much has changed. Thermostats need to be completed inside the bathroom; radiant panel needs to be done in Administrative Assistants office and we have some regulating of the boilers. Airport Manager Shaw said the heat is working well.

c. Update on the Correctional Facility HVAC Project

Not much has changed. We are still waiting for parts to arrive.

d. Discussion of Providing Health Benefits to County Commissioners.

- In a follow up to Bob Duke' suggestion to provide a comparison to other Counties, we did get that information. Seven (7) Counties pay between 85% -100% of Health Care benefits in addition to the Commission stipend. The salary range for a Commissioner is \$3700 to \$16,000. Knox County falls in between that range.
- Commissioner Pohlman feels that having the Health Care option may attract a more committed and qualified pool of candidates to serve Knox County.
- Administrator Hart stated when the County adopted the Charter the health benefits were taken away. There is no money in the 2022 Budget for these benefits. So this would have to be included in the 2023 Budget, and the Budget Committee would have to approve that first.
- Commissioner Pohlman said that she would be willing to give up the stipend to have benefits.
- Commissioner Parent stated they should get health benefits. He said maybe not full benefits as Commissioners are considered Part Time.
- Commissioner Meriwether said she would like to know what it would cost the County to provide the benefits to Commissioners.
- Administrator Hart will follow up and provide information. There is nothing we can do until 2023 due to there is no extra funding.
- Commissioner Meriwether wants to make sure this is not lost, suggested to bring up at each Commission meeting. She asked would there be an option to take the stipend if do not take the health insurance?
- Administrator Hart said that was correct.

e. Other

- Talking about hybrid meetings, Geoffrey Parker said he would be happy to go look at the Commission Hearing room, and come up with some options by the next Commission Meeting in February.
- Commissioner Meriwether wants to find out if there is money in American Rescue Plan for this kind of technology.
- Administrator Hart stated that he will run this by the consultant to see if this item would be eligible. If so, it will have to be approved by the Commission.
- Administrator Hart stated that last night there was a Planning Board meeting regarding the eight (8) new hangars at the Knox County Regional Airport. The meeting started at 6:00 P.M. The Shore Land Review Committee tabled our request so there will be a discussion tomorrow to find out what our next step will be. Asked to be on Selectmen meeting agenda regarding shore land zoning ordinance and the map for the Town. We are concerned they are not moving as fast as we'd like. We are also a little concerned because funding could be jeopardized down the road if we don't do something soon. There is also a concern that the potential hangar owners not being interested any longer because of the wait. We are trying to look at some other avenues.
- Airport Manager Shaw stated that the Town of Owls Head tried to strong arm us in not storing any jets in any hangars that we build at the Airport. We can't discriminate on who we provide aviation service to. He stated that we don't have any plans to store jets but will not take that as a condition in the permit. The Planning Board already permitted our

hangar taxi lane, and we have already constructed the hangar taxi lane. All of the areas that are in the hangar taxi lane have been constructed and there is no wet land impact. There is no new impact in these areas. They permitted a project for us, so we built the project and now they are not allowing us to build the eight (8) new hangars that were projected on the original project.

- Commissioner Pohlman is concerned about the loss of funding opportunities. She is afraid this will have negative economic impacts. She is hoping the County and Town of Owls Head will come to fair terms for the benefit for all the Communities.
- Commissioner Meriwether asked is the issue of the shoreline zoning somewhat a Town fabricated issue, correct.
- Airport Manager Shaw said that was 100% correct.
- Commissioner Meriwether stated, they basically a shore land zone where basically there was none.
- Airport Manager Shaw stated that what they did was they singled out the Knox County Airport to protect a resource that they're not uniformly protecting around the Town. They put that on maps to prevent the Airport from expanding and growing over the years. When we delineated that and provided that to the committee with scientific data, they refused to change the map because that meant that this project could move forward. So that is where we are at.
- Commissioner Meriwether asked if our legal counsel totally supports what he just said.
- Airport Manager Shaw stated that was his understanding but would defer to Administrator Hart.
- Administrator Hart agreed with that. He said that the big issue is the Town of Owls Head voted that through at a Town Meeting, the ordinance and the map. So it is an official document. Now to undo that is to go back to a Town Meeting and have it amended, replaced or revoked, and replaced with something that is better. Not necessarily something that assists us, but something that makes the map correct and the ordinance correct. That is what we are striving for. We are not just doing this for ourselves it is something that needs to be fixed for other parts of the Town as well. The other option would be for us to get a petition signed by so many voters, and get this on a Town Meeting. The final option would be to sue the Town.
- Commissioner Meriwether stated her concerned that we might be pushing to have this taken to a Town meeting for the Town to vote on, and we have already been subjected to the Town voting based on some heated emotional campaigning. So that it is now doubtably reinforced that this is a shore land zone, when it in fact is not. Is that the way we want to go rather than using more scientific and conclusive evidence that it is simply is not shore land zoning, as there is no shore land there to be protecting.
- Airport Manager Shaw said that they have gone to all the meetings and they have refused to accept our scientific data. We can pile the scientific data in front of them all day long, but it is their choice to accept it or not. They are choosing not to accept it.
- the Ordinance Review Committee is not accepting the shore land facts the Town presented. He said that they are eighteen (18) months into this project right now.
- Commissioner Meriwether suggested that maybe the County should take this issue before a Judge.
- Administrator Hart will take part in a Zoom meeting tomorrow with Airport Manager Shaw, himself, legal counsel and Amy and Greg to talk about how to we prepare to go to the Selectmen, what do we say and what we want to try to achieve. That's our next step.
- Meeting on ARPA will be held on January 21st.
- Airport Manager Shaw stated that if we just abandon the fight we jeopardize losing all Federal Funding.

VII. Adjourn

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

The regular meeting adjourned at 4:11 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

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