

# KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

**Regular Meeting**

**Thursday – January 20, 2021 – 5:00 P.M.**

The Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Thursday, January 20, 2022, at 5:00 P.M., via ZOOM.

**Commission members present were:** Dorothy G. Meriwether, Commissioner District #1, Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2 and Sharyn L. Pohlman, Commissioner District #3 (arrived 5:43).

**County staff present included:** County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Chief Deputy Patrick Polky, and Systems Administrator Mike Dean.

**Budget Committee members present:** Chair Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke (arrived at 5:30), Roger Peabody, Barry Norris, Charles Grover and Nick Lapham.

**Absent:** Budget Committee members Gayle Gallant and Randy Stearns. Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Bob Wood, Communications Director Robert Coombs, EMA Director Ray Sisk, and District Attorney Natasha Irving.

## **Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting – Agenda**

**via ZOOM**

**Thursday – January 20, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.**

- I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)**
- II. 5:01 Public Comment**
- III. 5:05 Supplemental Budget Review  
Airport CARES ACT & AIP Projects  
ARPA Projects - Municipalities & Non-Profits**
- IV. Adjourn**

### **I. Meeting Called to Order**

The January 20, 2022 Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting was called to Order by Budget Committee Chair Shawn Levasseur and Commissioner Chair Dorothy Meriwether at 5:08 P.M.

### **II. Public Comment for Airport only:**

Chair Levasseur asked if there was any Public comment.

None.

### **Administrator Hart spoke: Preliminary Questions asked:**

- Admin Hart stated that he sent an email to all Budget Committee Members and Commissioners on January 13<sup>th</sup> that included three (3) attachments. The attachments were a spreadsheet on Airport and AIP projects, ARPA projects listing for municipalities and non-profits and the ARPA expenditure category which was a two (2) page spreadsheet. Panelists for this meeting are Commissioners, Budget Committee members, Administrator Hart, Finance Director Robinson and a couple Department Mangers. Everyone else that is attending has to raise their virtual hand and be called upon the Chair to speak. The Airport / AIP projects will go first and Airport Manger Shaw will speak to those briefly. After there will be a consensus vote. This is similar to the Budget process. This is an amended Budget under the Charter. We will however meetings we need and at some point we have to decide when our last meeting is. The reason being, we have to post a Notice in the paper ten (10) days before the Public Hearing and Final Vote. Then that will be in the amended Budget that will be voted on and will provide that to the State Auditors. We need to meet the posting and Notice requirement for the Press,

and the Town and provide an amended Budget form them and the budget Committee to review. When we get to the Municipal and Non Profit list this is color coded. The ones in yellow are the ones the Commissioners wanted to move forward in the process. Knox County received \$7.7 million dollars and we have \$3.85 million of that right now. Knox County will receive the other portion in May of 2022. We would like to have the list finalized by May 2022, approve the expenditure of all funds. This will be at net zero and will not affect the Budget. We are about \$500,000 into the \$7.7 million right now. We will have Department requests at our next meeting on February 3<sup>rd</sup> in two (2) weeks. We are aware we will not be able to fund every item as there is a total of \$13.1 million in requests. Just the yellow highlighted items in the spreadsheet equal \$6.9 million.

- A Budget Committee member asked if this will end up being a next zero, what role the Budget Committee plays in making decisions with the ARPA funds.
- Administrator Hart stated that they are approving the expenditures and approving revenue. So you are approving \$7.7 in expenditures and the net result will equal zero. This whole process has no impact on the taxpayers of Knox County. This has to be approved as part of the Budget because of the Federal funds that we are receiving. The Commissioners and Budget Committee will be approving the amount that will be expended.
- A Budget Committee member asked if they do not expend the whole \$7.7 million, then what.
- Administrator Hart stated that the County is receiving the \$7.7 and is expected to expend that whole amount, just like every other County or Municipality.
- Another Budget Committee member asked what input do you want or expect from us as Budget Committee members. Is that our role as Budget Committee members?
- Administrator Hart stated that it is their role and the Commissioners. We're going through a similar process as we did the Budget.
- A Budget Committee member stated that in the Charter any significant changes in the Budget can happen without the Budget Committees approve but it has to be ratified.
- Administrator Hart stated that tonight, first we need to focus on the Airport and AIP projects. The Airport funding is separate from ARPA. The best thing to do is to go through each one and decide if we will keep on the list or remove it. Some that have been removed that are ineligible under the ARPA guidelines. There are a few that now have to be removed due to ineligibility.
- A Budget Committee member said that we have already spent more money than we have. This is no different that the Budget process. This is just extra money we didn't have. It is a role for the Budget Committee because this does affect the County's expenses. It may come out to be net zero, but the point is it does affect the County Budget, County expenses.
- A Budget Committee member aske are we approving this on a Budget basis or on a policy basis.
- Administrator Hart said for tonight, it would make sense to go through each one and decide to keep or remove. Not vote dollar items because we don't have the Department requests yet. Just because you keep something on the list tonight does not mean that its approved, it's just still there for consideration.
- A Commissioner said there is a Maine State Statue (trying to find it) that says the Budget Committee has to approve federal dollars. The discussion is necessary and the Municipalities were very clear that they wante4d the Budget Committee involved. This list was vetted through an Attorney who determined whether things qualified or did not. The Commissioners went through this list and it took five (5) hours. If you do not agree on decisions we made then you as the Budget Committee needs to override us. Some of these decisions were very difficult to make.

### **Airport CARES Act & AIP Projects:**

- Airport Manager Shaw said as someone who has spent \$7.7 million dollars in the past year, it is a very difficult process of finding consensus for the projects that you want to pull off, and then getting them under contract. It is a daunting task for anyone. Luckily, we have a great team in the County between the Finance department, the Administrator and support of the Commissioners and the Knox County Public Advisory Committee. What we are coming up against now is that we have the remaining funds from the CARES Act that have not been allocated. There are a few projects that have come up. The first project that is on the list is the electrical service to the new hangar area. When that was originally

designed, they just designed the taxi lane portion of it. They didn't do any utility work and that was part of the scoping. As part of our \$1.1 million dollars every year, they try to keep that within that kind of Budget so we don't have these multiyear projects or grants that fun into each other. That project was completed last summer, and we had a significant amount of interest in the hangars. Now we need electricity down there. This project will fall under CARES Act. There will be slight delay, but the County is working aggressively towards a solution for that.

- The Airport is trying to acquire a piece of property on Benner Lane. One of the issues that we have is one of the areas that we are looking to develop is perceived a resource protection area. There are other spots at the Airport and on this property that are eligible for development. They would be recommended by FAA that we acquire this property and use it for hangar development. This is an area that is inside the Airport perimeter fence, and already has a taxi lane to it. This would be suitable for hangar development. It would be a good short term purchase for the County to be able to store aircraft while we work through this other issue regarding hangar taxi lane Phase 1.
- Paving project is another Airport project. How we planned our projects were we want our projects to generate revenue for the County and the Airport. We want the Airport to be sustainable forever. We don't want to go to come back to the taxpayers for money. We believe that there is enough revenue by the type of aircraft that come here, by the excise tax we generate from that, from the lease fees, the ground fees and from the fees that Cape Air pay. All of those things paint a really nice picture of how our Airport is doing financially. We want that to continue. Our initial investments in the CARES Act funds are revenue generating projects. Now, we are getting to the tail end of the funding, but we still have a couple million left. Plus last month the federal government announced they are giving us another \$1,011,000.00 for infrastructure. Our intention was to use the remaining funds for paving.
- AIP Projects are being used by our entitlement money per year which is \$1.1.
- Electric Aircraft and vehicle charging station has a huge opportunity for the Airport, State and Aviation in general. He met with a company this morning from California and they want to have an electric aircraft in the County by December, the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter. This would be a freight aircraft, and if we want o transition into electric aircraft and the way we move cargo and freight around the state by getting away from the loud planes, this would be a huge step for us. Getting a charging station for us at the Airport would enable us to really be the leader in the State and quite possibly in the Nation. The company from California is very ambitious, and they will be starting in the Caribbean this winter. They hope to have a unit here by the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter if it all works out. We will have to work with the FAA on this, but this would be a first in the County. This will change the industry, and it will have huge impacts for the Knox County Airport.
- The charging station will be based off from one pedestal almost refrigerator size.
- A Budget Committee member asked where we are weighing in and make decisions based on expenditures at the Airport for these projects, or is this just to enlighten us as to what these projects are.
- Administrator Hart explained that the reason for this is because the funds have to be approved the Budget Committee due to they are Federal Funds. The AIP will be part of normal Budget process.
- Budget Committee member said do we have to do a straw vote on the Airport projects?
- Administrator Hart stated that there is no straw vote. Tonight we need to do a consensus vote, and then this will come back for the Public Hearing and Final Vote in a few weeks.
- Commissioners have no questions for Airport Manager Shaw.

***A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to approve the Airport CARES ACT & AIP Projects.***

*In favor: 6 (Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Bob Duke, Barry Norris, Charles Grover and Nick Lapham)*  
*Against: 0*  
*Abstained: 0*

***A consensus vote was taken by the County Commission on whether to approve the Airport CARES ACT & AIP Projects***

*In favor:* 3 (Commissioner Meriwether, Commissioner Pohlman and Commissioner Parent)  
*Against:* 0  
*Abstained:* 0

### **ARPA Projects – Municipalities & Non –Profits:**

- Administrator Hart suggested going to the highlighted pages. What is in front of you is every project that was received for applications from Municipalities and Non-Profits in Knox County. The yellow highlighted projects are the ones the Commissioners requested to move forward, and the second page lists ineligible projects as determined by the ARPA consultant. There are three (3) additional ones that need to be added to the ineligible list.
- Administrator Hart suggested that we move to Public comment on ARPA Projects

### **Public comment on ARPA:**

*Commissioner Meriwether requested a two (2) minute time limit for each Public comment. Chair Levasser agreed. Once Chair Levasser allows a person from the Public to speak, Systems Administrator Dean will let them in for their two (2) minute comment.*

- Robert Kelley, St. George Community Development Corporation spoke: In the interest of those organizations like ours who have funding that has been disqualified, could you please provide a master list of those asks and specific organization total asks that have already been disqualified in order to free up the organizations that will not be part of this process.
- Administrator Hart stated that we can provide that first thing tomorrow.
- Lorraine Francis, Come Spring Food Pantry: She is speaking for all food pantries in Knox County that offer food for people in need, but also offer connections, support, hope and a break from isolation and loneliness. We are a bright spot in many people's lives, especially during the pandemic. We have recipients that tell us that we are the only people that they see all week. Our pantries encourage recipients to come to us first, get your food staples and use your other income to heat your home and keep your car running. These are important basic needs. She wants to stress the importance of a visible food hub in Knox County, an underserved area without transportation and other basic services. For those in need a fifteen (15) mile trip to Rockland may be a once a month event. Funding to continue our mission at Come Spring, to feed our neighbors with dignity, hope, and build out our pantry to continue serving our growing number of the most vulnerable population is critical. Our projected path at Come Spring is to be able to prepare ready to heat and eat, fresh and nutritious meals, store staples and along with fresh and emergency food. We also are providing a space for Knox County gleaners to continue to supply over 22 thousand pounds of fresh vegetables to 22 locations in Knox County.
- Bo Hoppin, Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership: We are twelve (12) miles off shore and focus on education training about Penobscot Bay, aquaculture research through our 3.2 acre research farm and focus on developing leadership skills in all the students we interact with both on the island and area schools to become leaders for the next generations of addressing really critical environmental challenges, especially when it comes to a changing climate. As many of you are aware, Penobscot Bay and the Gulf of Maine is warming at an unprecedented rate and that means that the lobster fishery could change. It is very clear that diversification is needed. Our proposal develops an aquaculture work force and provides aquaculture training. Our work primarily focuses on scallops and kelp right now. We will do that with working with area schools to deliver aquaculture work in schools, to train area teachers and to continue that work independent of us. We will create a high school internship program to engage high school interns in doing aquaculture work both in their own communities and at Hurricane Island. We will work with Maine College students to do science based aquaculture internships out on the island. We will partner with the University of Maine to offer aquaculture training and credentialing.
- Craig Currie, Selectperson Cushing Maine: For this process are you utilizing the updated final ARPA guidelines that were analyzing the new ARPA regulations and would be issuing new guidance. If there is a fair amount of change in that new guidance, are you all planning on reopening up the grant process, because right now I believe you are looking at just the grants that were put in by September of last year. The new regulations have some pretty significant changes in certain areas. He believes that ARPA allows you to

designate the funds from ARPA until 2024. So there is not a statutory rush currently to have to have to decide on how you are going to expend these funds. He believes that you have until 2026 to expend the funds. His final plea is about fairness. a lot of worthy groups have put time and effort into this rant application process. There are probably groups that didn't do through the process that are equally worthy. Would like you to consider two (2) things; there is no limitation on Counties and Municipalities to give the ARPA money directly back to all of the citizens under their areas, and that can be checked by legal counsel. The fairest way would be to give proportionately back the money to each municipality in Knox County.

- A Budget Committee member stated is what he said correct about being able to send it back to Municipalities?
- Administrator Hart stated he didn't think it is correct either, but he wants to talk to both Kathy and our ARPA Consultant to make sure we are agreement to that.
- A Budget Committee member said one of the big things about this is that is cannot be used for generic reducing budgetary burdens. He has to be used for specific losses or needs related to COVID.
- Administrator Hart said he will talk to Consultant and provide a response.
- A Commissioner said there is not one way this could be done. It has been proposed to us that we could in fairness, divide up the money by population and give it back to the Municipalities for them to expend according to the guidelines of the ACT. The problem for us comes from if we give money to an outside agency we the County are still responsible for the expenditure. So you can imagine the administrative burden that would be on the County if we now delegated all this money back to all of the Municipalities in Knox County and then had to track and report every expenditure. Does the majority of the Budget Committee feel that's an appropriate way to spend it or do we have the discussion first about the ways that we could use it based on specific County needs and the list of agencies that submitted requests. This can be a subjective decision. However, the Commission chose not to go in that direction.
- A Budget Committee member agrees with another member, now looking the latest treasury rulings. They are very clear that we cannot directly or indirectly offset reductions in net tax revenues resulting from this. The also talk about debt service and financial reserves cannot be taken care of by these funds. Most importantly, his view is each Town in the County has received appropriate amounts of ARPA funds. The County has now received its appropriate amount of ARPA funds and our job to spend those funds within the County or within the group. Sending those funds back he thinks is not the duty that was intended with sending the \$7 million dollars to Knox County. Suggests continuing the process that has been outlined and it is appropriate not to return the funds.
- Arian Clements, – Executive Director for Sexual Assault Support Services of MidCoast Maine: We have requested \$160,000 in funding for operations support to enable the staff to respond to sexual assaults, victims and survivors evolving needs in terms of their accessibility to services, their support and advocacy while also educating and preventing against perpetration in the Community. We are responding specifically to language in sections 2204 and 2205 of ARPA. This speaks to providing grant support to survivors of sexual assault, transiting to virtual services, meeting emergency needs of survivors and the funds available under the Child Abuse and Treatment Act. In our application we have identified the need of individuals in the State of Maine is roughly, according to the Maine Crime Victim survey the 1 in 5 Mainers will report having been the victim of rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. When we apply that 1 in 5 ratio to the Knox County Region, with a population of 39,736, we arrived at about a number of residents who could be in need of our services around 7,947 who would be eligible of our services. We are looking for a very conservative number of \$10 per potential Knox County victim survivor per year to help support them on their path to healing. 52 clients were seen at the Knox location in Rockland. We serve the entire MidCoast.
- Mark Primo, Genesis Fund: He works with a bunch of housing providers in Knox County. He was working with these groups prior to ARPA funding coming out, but when the funding came out they realized it was a great opportunity to get some help with funding with housing in Knox County. They tried to put together a comprehensive plan for housing on Madeline Lane in Rockport. This project is an attempt to change the way we provide homeless services and prevent the problem from getting even bigger. The ARPA funds seem like a perfect opportunity because of the challenges of housing have been exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. This is a large project but there is great network or folks that are working on the housing issues, combined with private money, we are hoping ARPA state money and to leverage all of these things together. We are ready to go. Any questions, please reach out and we would be happy to answer them.

- Susan DeRosario , MCH (Making Community Happen): We have four (4) housing facilities. There are three (3) in Rockland, and one (1) in Thomaston, and these are subsidized primarily by HUD. These are for older individuals and adults with disabilities. We also offer a service package, and their request was for Meal on Wheels. We work and collaborate with Spectrum Agency on Aging to provide those with a subcontractor. We receive about a third of the funds from them and the rest we need to fundraise. We have been doing Meals on Wheels before it was called that, so we have been doing this for over forty-five (45) years in Knox County. We never have a wait list because we feel that when someone is hungry they can't wait three (3) days, three (3) weeks or three (3) months. We understand that some places have a wait list so we try to make sure that never happens. No one is ever denied a meal because they cannot donate towards the cost of a meal. The donations come from private individuals, families, civic organizations, grants and opportunities like this. During the pandemic we were preparing one hundred (100) meals a day. During the pandemic we were preparing one hundred eighty (180) meals a day. We are looking to continue to provide hot meals five (5) days a week.
- Jesse Thompson, EMS Chief Town of Union: We have put in a request for money for a second ambulance. We not only serve the Town of Union, but Appleton and Washington as well. We have one rescue that does over six hundred (600) calls per year. If our rescue breaks down or need maintenance, then are forced to rely on local EMS services that are greater than twenty (20) minutes away. We do not only respond to those Towns but we provide mutual aid as needed. We are looking for a second rescue truck to be more efficient.
- Stephanie Primm, Executive Director of the Knox County Homeless Coalition: Without affordable housing it, our business cannot find and hire employees as it affects negatively our economy, the future of our Communities. At the Homeless Coalition we are seeing unprecedented demand in terms of volume. We are also seeing this is effecting low income people, moderate income people, Tim Carroll is having trouble hiring, our local hospital is having trouble hiring because people cannot find affordable housing. We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to leverage this money with other funds that are available to act and create affordable housing units Housing is a basic human need.
- **Public Comment on ARPA is closed.**

**ARPA Projects list:**

- A Commissioner thanked everyone that filled out applications. The Commission decided early on to only look at projects that benefited the Community as a whole. Things that only served one Municipality were remove right away. We did not know we were going to exceed the \$7.7 million. This was not an easy decision.
- A Budget Committee member stated we are being asked to pick winners and losers. Where it's by Municipality or by project. Are there some overall priorities or parameters? Appreciates the comment of "picking ones that serve the whole County". What are the most pressing County wide priorities that we could address with these funds?
- A Commissioner stated beyond the initial elimination of "will serve the Community as a whole", we then went to the U.S. Treasury's guidelines to get a sense of the five (5) priorities. Number 1 to address the direct needs to help fight the pandemic in terms of health and safety, Number 2, to help those most disadvantaged, those most affected were moderate and low income people, Number 3, essential workers, Number 4, loss of revenue for most Municipalities, because of the way we tax we did not lose revenue so this did not affect us and Number 5, infrastructure in the areas of water, sewer and broadband. Each request had to determine how it fit into the Treasury guidelines.
- A Budget Committee member stated it is important before we start going down the list to take everyone's temperature on the Budget Committee and figure out what approach we all want to take. He agrees with another Budget Committee member that kicking money back to the Town's is a fool's errand. The Commissioners are still responsible for reporting on how the money is spent. When he looked at the list of infrastructure needs, some of the Municipalities on the list have not managed their money very well in the last few years and quite frankly they are trying to catch up. He thinks that would be an insult to the federal government to spend the money that way. Those Municipalities should be taking care of their own issues. He does agree with all three (3) Commissioners and thinks the money should reach as many people throughout the County, and should not be targeted to industry. Our war on poverty, we have not won yet.

He is worried about how that money gets spent in homelessness and food pantries when we just keep; throwing money at it, we are not solving the problem. The money needs to be successful at what the mission is. That's how he feels. It should be County wide and it needs to be given to organizations that have a true success track-record, or we are all convinced that it is going to work.

- A Budget Committee member asked, we don't have to spend all this money this year, correct.
- A Budget Committee member stated, that is correct we do not have to spend it all this year.
- A Budget Committee member stated that we have until 2024 to make a decision and 2026 to implement it.
- A Budget Committee member has concerns as there a lot of pressing and needy organizations. From a long term perspective is there anything on the horizon that over time would be self-funding that would provide benefits across the County.
- Administrator Hart said we do not know the answer to that. You can obligate this until 2024 and expend by 2026. There isn't anything saying we can't do this sooner either. We went through a process, and to delay it for an additional two (2) years or not move forward, I don't know what we would gain by that. He is still receiving requests now and is telling people we had a deadline and it's past the deadline. It is not fair to those who did meet the deadline. If we didn't have a deadline then you would open this up forever. We are sticking to the deadline.
- A Commissioner spoke, With regard to the comment of winners and losers, her feeling is we are all winners if we are able to house people that need affordable housing. These people are our neighbors. If we can also provide basic healthcare services and educate our citizens using the funds that we have then we all win.
- A Commissioner stated that everyone who has spoken so far has hit nail on head. We need to provide help to those who need help. Last summer we thought it would be best to get a consultant on board that could give us proper advice. That is the route we choose and so far he thinks we are on the right track.
- A Budget Committee member stated funds have a wide variety of things that they can be applied to, and as someone commented earlier that has been expanded a little. I want to keep a very narrow focus on more towards things that are directly related to the crisis, and things that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. This would mean emergency services, providing housing or medical services and presume we will be receiving more details.
- Administrator Hart stated that we put all these applications into a shared folder to be viewed. If want more information or an Agency or Municipality to come forward to speak to you at a future meeting we can do that. Unless you request that there will not be additional information. The next meeting you will have requests from all the departments in the County as well to consider. That is why it was suggested to go through the list to determine if a project should stay on or be removed, and not vote on dollar amounts yet.
- A Commissioner had a question for Administrator Hart or Finance Director Robinson to see if they could give dollar amount for tonight purposes the total number that is on the sheet you sent us. Is that \$13million the entire request amount or do you have one that just the Commission approved?
- Administrator Hart stated that the total bottom line is \$13 million plus. If you take the yellow that is being requested to be moved forward by the Commission, minus the three (3) that he said were ineligible then it would be \$6,420,000,000. Also you have to consider we expended (based on the high side until we receive an invoice from the Consultant) for the Retention bonus that went through December 31st we are at about \$490-\$500,000 that we have expended. So you have to add that into that number. We are really closer to \$6.9 give or take. If approved all 1 yellow ones
- A Budget Committee member asked that does not include any of the department requests, correct.
- Administrator Hart stated that is correct. That would be if you approved all the ones in yellow. And what has expended to date.
- A Budget Committee member said he thinks we should go through the ones highlighted in yellow just to say yay or nay because eventually we will have to do some cutting or we will be over the limit.
- Administrator Hart agreed.
- A Commissioner stated to keep in mind we do not have to give full amount that is being requested.
- A Commissioner would encourage if anyone has questions from any of the applicants to please ask to have them come to answer questions.
- A Budget Committee member asked should we go through the yellow highlighted ones first and do we support the amount requested.

- Administrator Hart ask the Budget Committee and Commissioners to consider the departments' requests in two weeks first, and then decide at that meeting who you would like to come back for either Municipality or Non-Profit. If you want someone to present in two weeks who you want to come back to talk about their project. If you say you want to approve these department requests that will then lower the amount that goes to these other agencies. Again, we have to decide on the department list if we want to keep items or remove for good.
- A Budget Committee member suggested that we should start going through the highlighted ones first. Let's not think about the money portion right now. If we read the write up they provided really well, then we may not need them come in. Remember these applications are pretty detailed. He thinks we should make the monetary decisions in third phase.
- A Commissioner would like to put two projects back on for further discussion with the Budget Committee. The first one is the Hurricane Island Center and the second one is the MidCoast Internet Coalition.
- A Budget Committee member asked is broadband application more for then just Rockport isn't part of larger area?
- A Commissioner stated she was reluctant to say much of anything. Her reading of the application is that it is specifically for Rockport. This was one of the reasons why we crossed it off. The request came from Rockport it was written up; by the Town Manager of Rockport. Her understand is that MicCoast Internet Coalition has the intent to expand and serve other areas.
- Administrator Hart stated that if it is the wish of the Budget Committee to clarify that we can between now and the next meeting.
- A Commissioner said regarding the application for Broadband for Rockport she believes everything the other commissioner stated is correct. She supports broadband, the question is how do you achieve that Serious questions that were raised in one of the Select Board meetings about the viability, the organization , buildout costs and timelines cost, there are many questions to be answered. This should be taken slowly before any of us should commit any amount of funding towards broadband. She thinks that as a County we have great opportunities to provide broadband after we do a lot more research, and we have the time to do it.
- A Budget Committee member said broadband is a big thing and we need to understand before we either give it thumbs up or thumbs down. It is part of economic development.
- A Commissioner agrees and strongly encourages the opportunity to sit down as a group and understand more fully where we are, where we can get to and where we want to be. We need to present the axiom feasibility study which was just completed and it was to be discussed at the Camden Select Board meeting on Monday they tabled it. That study should be very telling in terms of who service now and who needs it. It is full of information and she understands that it helps answer a lot of questions and perhaps advance the process along to providing broadband. She feels everyone should have it and she would encourage getting the feasibility study.
- A Commissioner said she disagrees with the other Commissioner. She feels that we have somehow been brought into a discussion that has dragged us away from the essential purpose that we are supposed to be fulfilling. We should not be discussing the value of broadband. She does not think anyone will argue that this is essential infrastructure. The question is we have \$7.7 million dollars which isn't a whole lot. The question is, this is limited funds, and is giving money to any single Municipality, one that is being served, we need to take this money and give it to places with greater need. She would love to be in a position where we could give subsidies to everybody in Washington so they could get high speed internet. There are greater needs, we have homeless people.
- A Commissioner spoke and agreed that we do have higher pressing needs to feed, house and educate the citizens of Knox County rather than broadband.
- A Budget Committee member stated that everything we want to put out there as what some folks in this meeting are describing as a need, needs to be under a very bright spotlight. Whether that is an effort of let's say spending \$4 million dollars for the homeless it literally going to save the problem. Every company is trying to hire people. There are able people that are considered homeless and if they got a job they would be on their path to owning their own home or affording a place. We just need to put everything under a spotlight.



- Consensus votes on the ARPA items highlighted in yellow were taken: This would determine if an item would stay on or be removed by the Budget Committee. A couple items were determined ineligible so they were automatically removed.

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Town of Rockport’s request for Broadband to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 1 (Bob Duke)  
Against: 4 (Nick Lapham, Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur and Charles Grover)  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
**This item will be removed.***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to add the Hurricane Island Center’s request for Education Assistance to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 1 (Nick Lapham)  
Against: 0  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
**This item will be removed.***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Come Spring Food Panty’s request for Food Programs to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 4 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke and Charles Grover)  
Against: 0  
Maybe: 1 (Nick Lapham and Bob Duke)  
Abstained: 0  
**This item will stay on list.***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Isle au Haut’s request for Solid Waste Disposal to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 1 (Roger Peabody)  
Against: 4 (Nick Lapham, Bob Duke, Charles Grover and Shawn Levasseur)  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
**This item will be removed.***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Isle au Haut’s request for Affordable Housing to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 3 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur and Charles Grover)  
Against: 0  
Maybe: 2 (Nick Lapham and Bob Duke)  
Abstained: 0  
**This item will stay on list.***

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Knox County Homeless Coalition’s request for Affordable Housing to the ARPA list.*

*In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)*

Against: 0  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will stay on list.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the MCH Inc.’s request for Food Programs to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)  
Against: 0  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will stay on list.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Sexual Assault Support Services of MidCoast Maine’s request for Aid to Non-Profit Organization to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 4 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)  
Against: 1 (Bob Duke)  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will stay on list.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Town of Thomaston’s request for Aid to Non-Profit Organizations to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 5 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke, Nick Lapham and Charles Grover)  
Against: 0  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will stay on list.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Town of Union’s request for Ambulance to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 4 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke and Charles Grover)  
Against: 1 (Nick Lapham)  
Maybe: 0  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will stay on list.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Town of Vinalhaven’ s request for Workforce Housing to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 1(Charles Grover)  
Against: 3 (Nick Lapham, Bob Duke and Roger Peabody)  
Maybe: 1 (Shawn Levasseur)  
Abstained: 0  
*This item will be removed.*

*A consensus vote was taken by the Budget Committee on whether to keep or remove the Volunteers of America Northern New England request for Social Determinants of Health to the ARPA list.*

In favor: 0

*Against: 4 (Roger Peabody, Shawn Levasseur, Bob Duke and Charles Grover)*

*Maybe: 1(Nick Lapham)*

*Abstained: 0*

***This item will be removed.***

- Administrator Hart spoke and said that we are scheduled to meet February 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 P.M. by Zoom. Prior to that meeting will provide you another list from the departments.
- *Charles Grover made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Roger Peabody seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with both in favor.*

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:41 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin  
Administrative Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on February 17, 2022.**