

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Thursday – March 3, 2022 – 5:00 P.M.

The Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Thursday, March 3, 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.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, Sheriff Tim Carroll, Finance Director Kathy Robinson and IT Director Mike Dean.

Budget Committee members present: Chair Shawn Levasseur, Roger Peabody, Gayle Gallant, Barry Norris, Charles Grover, Randy Stearns, Bob Duke and Nick Lapham.

Absent: Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Bob Wood, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, District Attorney Natasha Irving, Communications Director Robert Coombs and EMA Director Ray Sisk.

Others: Lorain Francis ~ Come Spring Food Pantry, Peggi Stevens & Ellie Kastanopolous ~ Town of Isle au Haut, Molly Feeney ~ Knox County Homeless Coalition, Mark Primeau ~ Knox County Homeless Coalition/Genesis, Susan diRosario & Elisabeth Schuh ~ MCH, Inc., Arian Clements & Emily McGregor ~ Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine, Meredith Batley & Zel Bowman ~ Town of Thomaston/Midcoast Health Net and Jay Feyler & Jesse Thompson ~ Town of Union.

Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting – Agenda

via ZOOM

Thursday – March 3, 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. 5:03 Approve Minutes** (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)
 1. Minutes of Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting of February 3, 2022.
 2. Minutes of Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting of February 17, 2022.
- IV. 5:05 Supplemental/Amended Budget Review**
 1. Presentation by Seven (7) Municipal & Non-Profit Agencies to Budget Committee and Commission.
 2. Further Review of ARPA Projects – Municipalities & Non-Profits and Knox County Departmental List.
- V. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

The March 3, 2022 Joint Supplemental Budget Meeting was called to Order by Budget Committee Chair Shawn Levasseur and Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether at 5:04 P.M.

II. Public Comment:

Chair Levasseur asked if there was any Public comment.

- Amy Drinkwater spoke and supports having an extra ambulance in the County. A lot of services only have one ambulance. Union will be in charge of it, and wondered if it would be available for other Towns. Who would hold the insurance on it and who maintains the upkeep on the ambulance? Will this be primarily housed in Union? Will this ambulance be available for transfers or will it only be for Union?
- A Budget Committee member asked who Amy represents.
- Amy Drinkwater stated she represents Service Director for Thomaston, So. Thomaston and St. George.
- A Budget Committee member asked; the County will pay for this through ARPA funds and this will belong to the Town of Union as opposed to the County. Who will own the ambulance?
- Administrator Hart stated that the request for a new ambulance came from the Town of Union. Any money we give to an agency other than the County, it belongs to that agency. It is the County's money and we have to report for it, and the Agency has to help with the reporting. The ambulance would not belong to Knox County it would belong to Town of Union.
- Amy Drinkwater's question was; how would we borrow that ambulance if needed to be borrowed by another Town?
- A Budget Committee member stated that if this is a need for several Towns, then the several Towns should divide the costs.
- A Commissioner stated that we need to have this conversation when we address this with the representatives from the Town of Union.

III. Approve Minutes (Chair Shawn Levasseur for the Knox County Budget Committee, Commission Chair Dorothy Meriwether for the Knox County Commission)

1. Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting of February 3, 2022.

- *Charles Grover made a motion to approve the amended Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting on February 3, 2022. Nick Lapham seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor. (Barry Norris abstained.)*
 - *Commissioner Parent made a motion to approve amended the Minutes of the Supplemental/Amended Budget Review Meeting on February 3, 2022. Commissioner Pohlman seconded the motion. A vote was taken with all in favor.*
- Minutes from Supplemental/Amended Budget Review meeting of February 17, 2022 were not completed for approval at this meeting. It was discussed these will be placed on the March 17, 2022 agenda.

VI. Supplemental/Amended Budget Review: Knox County Departmental List:

- Administrator Hart stated there are seven (7) nonprofits and they will each have ten (10) minutes to present. They will be allowed into the meeting as a panelist while they present. There will be time for questions and answers after their presentation.
- A Budget Committee member asked; after we hear these presentations will be having a "straw vote", or will we approve that to be included in the \$6.7 million dollars that allocated or available, or just for further consideration in the final number?
- Administrator Hart stated it is up to the Budget Committee and Commission on how you want to proceed. Not sure what time we will finish up tonight after hearing all the presentations and then questions and answers. If we are going to discuss anything on department items those should wait until the 17th.
- A Commissioner stated because the final number is so close she asked everyone not to make the final vote after each individual presentation tonight.
- A Budget Committee member agreed as we have to consider a lot of other items.

- Administrator Hart said the intent tonight was not to make a final vote. We are here to listen to the presentation and then further discussion after. We do have to decide on what we are going to do on the 17th meeting.

Come Spring Food Pantry – Food Programs presentation:

- **Lorain Francis** ~ Board Chair for Come Spring Food Pantry and the Program Director for the Knox County Gleaners made a presentation. Bill Lombardi ~ Treasurer, is also on the call and listening in.

Come Spring Food Pantry is a healthy outcome project. We are renovating a facility to create a sustainable food hub to provide nutritional and equitable access for all. Our focus is on food assistance and distribution, along with fresh food storage and innovative educational programs. We are preparing our facility to support future pandemic and emergency needs. Based in Western Knox County, and serving the communities of Union, Appleton, Washington, Hope, So. Hope and Warren, which are underserved with many disadvantaged residents that are without transportation and the availability of basic services. For those in need a fifteen (15) mile trip to Rockland may be a once a month event. Come Spring Food Pantry is an essential asset and vital to this community. We serve large and small families, many seniors, widows, Veterans, young families and the working poor. We have those who visit who need us for a lot of food to feed their family and some for just a small amount. We encourage them all to come so they can use their extra money to buy gas and to heat their home. We expect to see more families as the crisis for gas, heat and groceries increase. Just one year ago, Come Spring Food Pantry a vacant building at 27 Common Road in Union. Our vision right from the beginning was to create a food hub just to serve Western Knox County at many different levels. But first, we had to put a new roof on the building, we painted inside and out, put in all new heating, added insulation and made plans on how to use the building and grounds. Our food pantry serves all of our surrounding communities, and since we have opened we have sixteen (16) new families that have found us. We serve 35-45 families and 85-100 individuals per month. We now have added an evening to serve those who work during the day. We serve everyone with equity and provide nutritional support. We have neighbors in need that were going hungry and going without good nutrition because they did not know we were located in the back of the Thompson Center. Our new location is solving that problem and we listen to the voices of those recipients. In the front portion of the building where the food pantry is located, building out a client choice shopping area where recipients actually shop and choose their food that they want for their families is our first priority. Our current model is pack bags with staples and proteins with a small amount of choice. The new model is critical in the steps to continue our mission of feeding our neighbors in need with dignity and hope without the stigma that comes with going to a food pantry and being handed a bag of food or a box. Our first summer, Come Spring collaborated with the Farmers Market. The market moved from Union Common to our field to be more visible, have better parking, and tie the Pantry into the Harvest Program that is offered through SNAP. We saw many people that came to the Pantry and took advantage of the program. This program allows everyone to have local meat, cheese and vegetables available at all income levels. Knox County Gleaners is now a program of Come Spring Food Pantry and is based out of the 27 Common Road building. In 2021, Knox County Gleaners worked with seventeen (17) Knox County farms including Erickson Fields. In 2021 we distributed 22,183 lbs. of vegetables into twenty (22) locations in Knox County. The value of distribution of this to our Communities is 88,732 serving and \$37,045. Funding is needed to secure our building for safety and weather with new doors, infrastructure, along with safe storage and equipment. We will have the ability to store fresh and emergency food to

distribute in Knox County. The new kitchen will be used to process clean foods into “ready to heat & eat” nutritious take home meals. We will offer educational programs on nutrition, safe handling of food and job readiness. We consistently monitor our success by the number of people we serve.

Come Spring Food Pantry- Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- A Budget Committee member asked what Come Spring Food Pantry’s annual budget is.
- Lorain stated the food budget is \$35,000 per year. The building budget that we fundraise for is also \$35,000 per year.
- A Budget Committee member asked is that your total capital needs right now?
- Lorain stated no it’s not. We money to build out the kitchen, provide more food, heating and we have a mortgage on building.
- A Budget Committee member asked moving forward beyond your buildout, are you looking to be funded just through donations. What is your vision beyond getting yourselves up and running?
- Lorain stated in multiple ways. Community donations, send out newsletters, work with corporations and grants for support for food.
- A Budget Committee member asked when the move happened.
- Lorain stated it happened about a year ago. We were located in the back of Thompson Center. It was in an area that was not seen from the road, and was hard for recipients to get up. When Covid hit there was not enough room in the building to space out “help” when packing bags and handing them out. It became evident we needed to become seen as many didn’t know we existed.

Town of Isle au Haut – Affordable Housing presentation:

- **Ellie Kastanopolous** ~ works for Isle au Haut Community Development Corporation. It is an organization on Isle au Haut that has been working for thirty (30) year to try to figure out affordable housing. Life on an unbridged island is very different from the mainland. The issues seem to be affordability on the island. We have one hundred- eighty five (185) houses on Isle au Haut, and all but twenty (20) are owned by summer residents, and there are another ten (10) rental properties. The issues facing us were that the younger families could not afford to move out to the island and so we were struggling to keep the school open, struggling to keep services going, struggling to find people who do work. The rental properties that we have built up, the Town owns three (3) properties, ICDC owns four (4) and there are three (3) properties owned by seasonal residents. Of the properties that we own and all children in the island school is living in ICDC housing. Of the rental residents four (4) of them are more successful fishermen and all four (4) of them went to the ICDC school. Finding a place for people to live is very difficult. The property values are really high. The Town is concerned about the issue and is committed by donating land for homes to be built on. The first five (5) ICDC houses were all new construction and a sixth (6th) one we have purchased and need to rehab. The proposal for \$175,000 is for a Town owned rental property that has sat vacant all winter. This house needs to be rehabbed, it has been rented hard, and we want to convert it into a duplex. This would accommodate two (2) one bedroom apartments nicely. The needs assessment we did there is a large need for single people or young couples to have a place to stay. The Town would like to pass ownership of three (3) properties that it owns to ICDC as they are set up for this. The seasonal residents with higher incomes have been supportive. We know that building new housing is more expensive than it’s ever been. Out here we have to pay the added cost of hauling all that stuff including gravel which is phenomenally expensive.
- **Peggi Stevens** ~ stated that we run on a very small work force. We have thirty-five (35) people in the winter for population. It’s paramount to have ICDC in partnership with us to take over some of

the housing issues. One house that we need to get renovated which is not livable right now but it could be. This is a Town issue and I think it needs to be addressed. The ARPA is perfect. This has all the essentials, a road, septic we just don't have the money to finish it off. It's critical we get this finished soon. We get very little from Knox County, we pay our County tax and it would be great if we could finish this.

Town of Isle au Haut - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- Commissioner asked we made decision that the County dollars need to go to broader community and not to individual municipalities. How would helping one (1) municipality actually help the greater community?
- Ellie stated our community is really special and island communities are disappearing. There are only fourteen (14) unbridged island communities left. Isle au Haut brings a lot of people to the state. We get 5,000-8,000 visitors a year on the island. Will not take much for the community to fall apart.
- Peggi – the bigger communities have essential services nearby. We don't have services like Rockland or Camden, we have very little. It makes a bigger difference to us. This housing will make a difference.
- Commissioner asked what is the impact of the fishing community
- Ellie stated it is changing a lot. Isle au Haut was populated 100 years ago 300 residents, and that is no longer true. Fishing is a lot easier on the main land where your boat makes up time and space. The fishermen are struggling to keep themselves afloat.
- A Commissioner stated the lack of affordable housing is a crisis in Knox County and if the islands can't provide affordable housing there long term stability is seriously in question. This affects all of us in a variety of different ways. She did view and tour the housing on the properties on Isle au Haut. The funding that they are asking for, for this specific house is totally unlivable but it does have potential.

Knox County Homeless Coalition – Affordable Housing presentation:

- **Mark Primeau** stated the Genesis Fund was working with Great Partners including with Knox County Homeless Coalition, Habitat for Humanity and the folks at Isle au Haut. We were working on these projects, and then Covid hit, and exacerbated an already challenging housing market. Showed a PowerPoint proposal. Phase I - Midcoast Habitat for Humanity - Philbrook II - \$180,000, Midcoast Habitat for Humanity/Knox County Homeless Coalition – Talbot Ave. – 320,000, Knox County Homeless Coalition – Madelyn Lane - \$1.2 million, KCHC/Knox County Sheriff's Office – Site TBD - \$500,000, Isle au Haut – Isle au Haut Preservation - \$400,000 and Phase II – Knox County Homeless Coalition – Madelyn Lane - \$1.5 million.
The largest project is the 6 Madelyn Lane which is a \$6-\$7 million dollar project which is a rehab of the former PenBay Medical office building. We have a private donor that has committed up to \$3 million dollars which is a dollar for dollar match. We are trying to raise some money. Dan Brennan, from Maine Housing has been to the property twice and will be on TV. These projects are just about shovel ready.
- **Molly Feeney** stated we are a group of supportive providers and have a clear awareness of where our community needs are right now. She shared some client stories. Knox County Homeless Coalition is addressing disparities for local low income and homeless populations of Knox County. It is important to unpack what that really means. Two years ago we bucked up and didn't really know what we were getting into as the pandemic started. It was December of 2020 when the phone calls started coming in. Houses were being brought up by “out of staters” without the intention of renewing leases with already established renters. Prices of homes were skyrocketing making more people land in rental community. As these calls come in they are fearful and frustrated after there thirty (30) days are up. The “who” behind this is cashiers, bank tellers, social workers medical provider, and the best they could do was find a hotel room for these people. We have 50% of our clients are looking for stable housing, and we have fifty (50) families on wait list. Those numbers

combined roughly are about 300 community members seeking stabilized housing today. That is only through the pipeline of KCHC. This housing pandemic has no bounds on how it's impacting us. She learned from another community meeting those hospitals, and our law enforcement agencies are hemorrhaging from the response to acute mental health crisis. These folks who are experiencing acute mental health crisis are also not getting their basic needs met from food insecurity to shelter. This is not an individualized battle. One major individualized battle in this fight is that this is a community responsibility, and the plan that we have laid out creates a right housing option which also create sustainable housing.

Knox County Homeless Coalition - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- A Budget Committee member asked do we have the break down that was show on the screen.
- Administrator Hart stated that was part of the application and this PowerPoint should have been in the packets. He can provide after this meeting.
- A Budget Committee member asked since we have a request for more money than what is available and your request is by far the largest. Do you have this prioritized? He would like to see the projects listed in priority.
- Molly stated that you will find the long term impact it will impact other areas of need.
- A Commissioner wanted to address the fact that someone said homelessness is a problem and people need to get a job. Her understanding is that this collection solves what the collation has determined as all of the problems contributing to homelessness in Knox County.
- Molly stated she respectfully disagrees with the irtraceable problem as she works with these families and it is incredibly hard to find stable employment when you have to live in your car. The reality is basic needs will promote stability and forward movement.
- A Budget Committee member asked if the \$400,000 is an additive to the request for Isle au Haut.
- Mark stated his understanding was that was a separate request.
- A Commissioner wanted to reinforce what Molly was speaking to about the ability to provide housing addresses and so many different needs in our community. She would encourage everyone who received the letter a few days ago to read the letter from KCHC. Eleven (11) of our community providers and organization have signed this letter of support. All these organizations are imploring us to take action for what is a community housing crisis and mental health crisis. The backbone of our community is affected by these crises. It is important for us to be able to take a leadership position in addressing the needs of our community.
- Administrator Hart asked if anyone wanted the coalition to provide prioritized list.

MCH. Inc. – Food Programs presentation:

- **Susan diRosario** is making a request for the MCH Knox County Meals on Wheels program. They have been doing home delivered meals to low income and older individuals since 1971. The organization started with ten (10) people. Prior to the pandemic we were delivering five (5) hot meals per day and about hundred (100) people were recipients. As pandemic became more of an issue in Knox County we received more requests because people were not receiving the help as much as people would like to from their friends, family and neighbors. So our numbers zoomed from one hundred (100) a day to one hundred eighty (180) a day. Had to restructure everything as of March 16th, 2020. We had to make a decision to not do five (5) hot meals a day but only two (2) hot meals a day and two (2) frozen. We could not have contact with volunteers and recipients. We had to deliver these in cooler containers outside people's homes so there was no connection with others. That continued, and as of November 2020 I heard from Washington DC where there was going to be an opportunity to be part of a partnership with CDC, Walgreens and CVD to have vaccine clinics. Eventually we were able to have vaccine clinics at Methodist Conference home. This is where all of our meals are cooked. Volunteers would come in at 5:00 a.m. to make sure

things were ready for the five (5) routes. These routes go from the hills and valleys of Washington, Union, Hope, Spruce Head, and Cushing etc. Some routes are one hundred (100) miles round trip and some volunteers are doing the trips and not charging us mileage. Food cost have risen dramatically, they we are part of a group purchasing plan. We do have a registered dietician that reviews all the menus and approves them. Containers that Meals on Wheels use are only made by one (1) company. They cannot use a chinet or paper product they have to be a certain type of product or will not retain the heat. They have not had a raise in pay for the staff throughout the pandemic. Where they are nonprofit do not pay high wages. We knew at any given time any one of our staff members could leave for a higher paying job. The volunteers are committed to the mission.

- **Elisabeth Schuh** stated they are currently serving all of Knox County and approximately one hundred forty (140) hot meals a day. At the beginning of the pandemic we used to deliver five (5) hot meals per week and two (2) frozen. We are now back to five (5) hot meals per week as our volunteers deliver daily. This adds up to 40,000 meals per year. Food cost for 2021 was \$87,000, containers are \$16,000 and annually it is about \$103,000. There is a suggested donation of \$5 per meal. The average that is contributed is 36 cents right now because people can't afford to pay. It's not just the meal it's the fact that someone cares.

MCH, Inc. - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

No questions

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine – Operational Support presentation:

- **Arian Clements** is the Director for Sexual Assault Support Services from Midcoast Maine also known to many as SASSMM. SASSMM is the only Sexual Assault provider for the Midcoast. We were established in 1983 originally serving the area of Brunswick, Harpswell and the surrounding islands as well as Lincoln and Sagadahoc County. In 2011, when the Public Health Districts realigned, we gained the additional Counties of Knox and Waldo. In 2016 they were a staff of six (6) stretched up and down the coast trying to meet the needs of many. We have been working really hard to secure funding to increase programing and increase staffing. We have succeeded in that effort. Now our complete service area is from Brunswick to Winterport. SASSMM has two (2) hats that it wears. One is the direct intervention support services piece. Since 2017 we have developed of our Midcoast children's advocacy centers. Those respond to child sexual abuse and developments since 2017 children's advocacy centers. Those respond to child sexual abuse. The child is being interviewed by a trained forensic interviewer, and in another room a DA, the child protective Service Worker and Law Enforcement Officer involved in the case are all watching this interview happen on a screen making sure that their questions are being answered. This way the child goes not have to go to multiple centers and retell their story to have to relive that experience. In the Family Advocate space the person who brought the child in is also meeting with an Advocate. They are being connected to resources that they may need. We have three (3) established locations in Wiscasset, Rockland and Belfast. Over this last year the clients served overall were served about 488 clients by SASSMM, and over half were children. We do number of prevention and education activities. Those exist through curriculum in our schools grades kindergarten up through college level. Sexual violence is something people do not like to talk about. In Section 2204 & 2205 in ARPA it speaks to providing grant support to survivors and sexual assaults, and transitioning to virtual services, meeting the emergence needs of survivors and the funds available under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act. This also directly offsets costs we have at the Midcoast CAC. When we started to come out of the pandemic and children were getting back to school we were seeing an increase of Sexual Assaults being reported and disclosed. We utilize Census numbers in Knox County which is a population of about 39,000 we applied that one (1) in five (5) ratio to that population estimating nearly 8,000 residents would likely to be eligible for our

free and confidential services. What that funding would do would support the ongoing continuing staffing of our programs. We do not have high salaries and it is hard to maintain staff.

- **Emily McGregor** stated we also cover stalking and dissemination of private images also known as the recent revenge porn law. We cover those two (2) things as well as Sexual violence.

Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- A Budget Committee member asked; what is your main source of income to carry on with services.
- Arian stated that 85% of our income comes from Federal and State funding which we apply for every year.
- A Budget Committee member asked at the end of two (2) years you would have to increase your requests for funding sources?
- Arian stated yes that is how all of our funding is built. If you build it they will come is typically what happens with clients. As they learn about our services and know we are here our numbers would increase. Each year Federal Government does an assessment and is typically increasing our levels of grants in our area.
- A Budget Committee member asked if you receive these funds would make your more or less likely to get more Federal funding to fill in the void after the ARPA funds run out.
- Arian stated it would make us more competitive because we are showing that we are responding to a need on the ground. This would highlight the growth and response. One of the biggest challenges we have is that people don't know us as well as they know us down in our more southern services areas.

Town of Thomaston of Midcoast Health Net – Knox Clinic presentation:

- **Meredith Batley**, Executive Director at Knox Clinic she shared a PowerPoint presentation on the Knox Clinic.
She has a joint application for funding with Thomaston. The Knox Clinic is a twenty three year (23) old non-profit in the region providing care to people who are uninsured, underserved and low income. Thomaston is also partnering with them to work on a very exciting prospect. There is an urgent need for more care. There needs to be access for everyone in the Midcoast regardless of your ability to pay. Our model incorporates primary care, dental care and mental health services. We are envisioning something much larger than what we currently do. We are unable to expand our services in our current model and our current location. Right now we have one Wednesday night a week medical clinic with our volunteer physician and there is a lot more need than what we can tackle. Our Dental clinic is offsite in a retired dental office and so it leads to less efficient care. Our goal is to get everyone under one roof and to ramp up the services to cover a lot more people. We did a survey in the community. 64% said they are not getting adequate access to care and care is a broad topic. This includes dental, mental health, substance use in addition to primary care. We looked at the major barriers and all of it is financial. The lowest income families are having the hardest time accessing care. What we found with our survey is about 2/3 of respondents have experienced an adverse social determinant of health within the past two (2) years. 97% of respondents with incomes of less than \$20,000 report not having adequate access to health care. 100% of respondents who do not have a steady place to live report not having adequate access to health care. 100% of respondents who are physically or verbally hurt by friends or family “fairly often” or “frequently” report they do not have adequate access to health care. There is a model that does exist called the Federally Qualified Health Center. It is holistic patient centered, it integrates all insurances and has a sliding scale, it also assures access to care for all, regardless of ability to pay. Every County in Maine has a Federally Qualified Health Center. It is just that Knox County's happens to be on Vinalhaven which is a one (1) hour ferry ride away. We are hoping with community support we can change that. We have applied for a USDA grant which is still pending.

We have drawings and some estimates for the building renovations which is about \$280,000. We need \$900,000 for additional 3600ft clinic structure and \$200,000 in startup equipment and supplies. The total would be \$1,380,000.

- **Zel Bowman**, Selectboard Member stated we recognize a need for these services. We are looking at a part of the old Laura Libby School. This site is very centrally located.

Town of Thomaston of Midcoast Health Net - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- A Budget Committee member asked if there a way to leverage what we would fund by saying if we agree to spend this much if you can match it. It might be one (1) to four (4) or whatever the ratio might be. Is there a way we can create a greater impact?
- Meredith stated there will be significant capital costs to get this started. She sees the project as a chance to proactively build and sustain a community level infrastructure. Having everyone put some change into the pot makes sense.
- A Budget Committee member asked from the County point of view whether that is in the guidelines or not.
- A Commissioner stated we basically give the money, and the County has to come back through to make sure money being spent according to the guidelines of the American Rescue Plan. If you start spreading it out it becomes a logistical nightmare for recording. That is her understanding. Grant writing, like with Maine Housing Authority, will prioritize if they recognize a project is supported by a community grant.
- A Budget Committee member stated the USDA has identified the Knox County Clinic as a tier 2 eligible clinic. There is only two (2) in the State that they have identified as this. Knox Count is at the top of that list. That list is worth \$5-\$10 million dollars. There are federal dollars for Knox County Health Care. While this request came from Thomaston it is not a Thomaston only request.
- A Commissioner stated this is amazing to see the wide support and collaboration of so many communities. Everyone's on board with supporting quality health care that's affordable.

Town of Union – Ambulance presentation:

- **Jay Feyler** stated that Union has only one (1) ambulance. We do contract with two (2) other municipalities for services. Union does mutual aid for three (3) other municipalities. No one else has a spare ambulance to loan to another municipality. This puts more strain on an already strained emergency service in the County. The ambulance would be housed in Union. Every County has signed on to the Public Work Mutual Aid. We have a pre-agreement, so if you need to borrow equipment it goes to that municipality. Everybody knows, you break it you fix it. We are doing that right now with Vinalhaven with a Public Works truck. We were recipients of that service when our Public Works garage burnt down. This benefits the entire County and is a lifesaving issue.
- **Jesse Thompson**, Ambulance Chief stated this will be available to any ambulance service that needs it in the County.

Town of Union - Discussion from Commission & Budget Committee:

- A Budget Committee member asked if it would be Union emergency services personnel that would go on a call if another Town needed the ambulance.
- Jay stated that if it was a mutual aid call the Town of Union would go to Hope. If it's a call for an ambulance that is out of service for two weeks then it would be that Towns employees.
- A Commissioner asked how would you handle main costs, stocking, licensing, scheduling for availability and who gets priority.

- Jay stated it is first come first serve for priority. The stocking is similar to our Public Works trucks; you need to bring it back the way it was given to you. The ambulance would be licensed through Town of Union with a mutual aid agreement.
- Jesse regarding the restocking or use of the medications on the ambulance, Union would take all their medications off the ambulance because they belong to us and we have to maintain our medications. Whichever Town was using it would use their medications.
- A Budget Committee member asked about transports. Wasn't aware of any other Towns in Knox County that actually did transports anymore. His understanding is that you would have to be licensed to do a transport.
- Jesse stated you have to be PIF certified to take a Paramedic inter-facility transfer. To do a BLS transfer from Pen Bay back to Union you do not need a special license. The license does cover a normal transfer.

General:

- A Budget Committee member stated that anyone listening in, most of these non-profits have websites if you would like to learn more: **Come Spring Food Pantry** – comespringfp.org, **Isle au Haut** – isleauhaut.org, **Knox County Homeless Coalition** – homehelphome.org, **MCH Meals on Wheels** – mchinc.org, **Sexual Assault Support Services of Midcoast Maine** – sassmm.org, **Knox Clinic** – knoxclinic.org.
- Administrator Hart said the spreadsheet we included is a combined spreadsheet which is based off the meetings we have had so far. Finance Director Robinson and Administrator Hart have reviewed this and have captured everything as well as we could. We do want to make a note that the yellow items on bottom of page one (1), we kept those on because they were a split votes. This will be something to discuss the next meeting. The rest of the items were moved forward from the three (3) prior meetings. The grand total is \$8.5 million. If you took all the highlighted out it would be \$7.9 million. He was asked by the press where we are money wise, and he let them know we are at \$8 -\$8.5 million. We are still over the \$7.7 million. Administrator Hart needs to know what we want to do at the next meeting.
- A Commissioner stated the total number you gave of \$7.9 million, but that does not include the money used in 2021. Is that right.
- Administrator Hart thought that was correct but will need to verify with Finance Director Robinson. He said that amount would have to come off the \$7.9 million.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that was correct.
- A Commissioner asked Finance Director Robinson what was the amount committed in 2021.
- Finance Director Robinson replied, the amount is \$489,000. The list that was presented is only new items, nothing to do with what has already transpired. So really the total amount available would be \$7.2 million.
- A Budget Committee member asked won't there have to be a certain amount reserved for the maintenance of this. The people working on this will have to be paid. Can we get an estimate of all of that so we know how much we will have left to distribute.
- Administrator Hart stated that he and Finance Director Robinson will have to discuss this. What we needed the additional money was for Legal, Consultant and reporting.
- Finance Director Robinson stated that this is going to be hard to estimate what we are going to need for administrative costs because it will depend on the projects that get approved, and once we dive into those projects as to how extensive; what's going to be involved with those projects. Her recommendation would be awarding the money knowing that there is going to be a little bit less, and which project is that going to come from. You may award up to the dollar value for X amount of projects. Let's say we're giving the Homeless Coalition we're giving them a cost up to something , but the Legal costs will reduce the costs that they get awarded. We will not be able to give all of the money until we come closer to messaging the paperwork of the projects that get

awarded. The ones that are internal are simple. It is the external ones that are going to be more complex.

- A Budget Committee member asked do we truly understand the Legal process that we need to go to with each one of these grants that we give. It is a varying degree, is there a percentage?
 - Finance Director Robinson stated there are certain guidelines we have to follow relating to bidding and awarding and it depends on how much money is awarded. We haven't had a lot of time spent reviewing the projects from a Legal perspective to really get into the nuts and bolts of what we are going to require from them. There are steps that are going to need to be taken. It will really be looking at each one once you decide that's the project you want to do, and then making sure that they abide by what is required of them.
 - Administrator Hart said we will we have to make a tentative award to an agency, and then figure out the cost, come back and have a final vote on the number we are actually going to give that agency, minus whatever administrative costs will be. If not, we could end up awarding too much money and go over the \$7.7 million.
 - A Budget Committee member suggested writing a letter, making the award less the unanticipated Legal cost. In other words they know what they received less the legal amount. We just don't want to go over this again and again.
 - A Budget Committee member asked if the Legal cost going to apply any County funding that we do from ARPA.
 - Administrator Hart stated he didn't think there was going to be any Legal costs. Finance Director Robinson stated earlier that internally there wouldn't be much for Legal costs.
 - Finance Director Robinson stated that was correct. We already know what we need to do, when purchasing an item, providing a service and we already have all of that documentation. Once we get into giving outside agencies money, then there is a whole different level of reporting, accountability and documentation. It is definitely much more extensive for the outside agency and internally that is what we do every day.
 - Administrator Hart will send out the Homeless Coalition project listing. We will work off this list for next meeting. Will we be taking temporary votes on possible money amounts?
 - A Budget Committee member stated we should start deliberating these. We have received all the information we need.
 - Administrator Hart stated our next meeting will be on March 17th and March 31st scheduled. Will have to have that meeting because we have to have a Public Hearing and Final Budget Vote. This will also include the AIP and CARES Act Projects for the Airport. We have to do a final vote on those. We have to allow time to post this in the newspaper for the Public Hearing and send the budget out to all the Towns prior to the Vote. We have to decide on the 17th if the 31st will be the Final Vote or if we will need an additional meeting after that
 - A Commissioner asked can't these awards be made subject to the cost we may incur including Legal and in house costs.
 - Administrator Hart stated yes.
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- *Nick Lapham made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bob Duke 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 7:28 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

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