

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – April 11, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at 2:00 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Edward B. Glaser, 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, HR Manager Amber Christie, Sheriff Patrick Polky, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Communications Director Robert Coombs and Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw.

Absent: Chief Deputy Curt Andrick, IT Director Zach Greene, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, Jail Administrator Robert Wood, and District Attorney Natasha Irving.

Others: Van Thompson, St. George Selectmen.

Regular Meeting – Agenda Tuesday – April 11, 2023 – 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 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 March 21, 2023.
 - iii. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - iv. Warrants
 - v. Reserve Withdrawals.
- IV. 2:10 Action Items**
 - 1. Act to Approve Appointments to the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC).
 - 2. Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign and Execute a New Hangar Lease at the Knox County Regional Airport for Dan Dufault.
 - 3. Act to Establish a Charter Review Subcommittee to Review Charter Issues in the Operation of County Government and Administration and to Make Recommendations on Needed Charter Changes; this Subcommittee will be Subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act.
- V. 2:25 Discussion Items**
 - 1. Update on Projects.
 - 2. Other Items.
- VI. 2:35 Other Business**
- VII. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Glaser called the regular meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:01 P.M.

- II. Public Comment** - Public Comment during other portions of the meeting will only be granted by permission of the Chair.
None

III. 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 March 21, 2023.
- iii. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
- iv. Warrants
- v. Reserve Withdrawals

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to approve the Consent items 1-5 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

IV. Action Items

1. Act to Approve Appointments to the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC).

The Airport Public Advisory Committee and Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw make the following recommendations for appointments to the APAC this year:

- Kathleen Oldakowski, District #1 Seat, South Thomaston, appoint for a 1-year term through 2024.
- Roger Peabody, District #2 Seat, Warren, appoint for a 3-year term through 2026.
- Jan Gaudio, South Thomaston Seat, South Thomaston, appoint for a 3-year term through 2026.

- Katie Oldakowski introduced herself to the Commissioners and answered any questions they had.
- Van Thompson introduced himself to the Commissioners, and is looking to be appointed to APAC. He also answered questions from the Commissioners.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve Appointments Kathleen Oldakowski to District #1 for a one (1) Year Term Through 2024, Roger Peabody to District #2 for a three (3) Year Term Through 2026 and Jan Gaudio to South Thomaston for a three (3) Year Term Through 2026 to the Airport Public Advisory Committee (APAC). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

2. Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign and Execute a New Hangar Lease at the Knox County Regional Airport for Dan Dufault.

Hangar #57 is located on the new hangar taxilane, at the Knox County Airport. This lease is the third of twenty three (23) new leases in the new hangar area recently permitted by the Town of Owls Head after an 18-month delay. This lease will be the third of three planned 80'x80' hangars. Dan Dufault is an existing hangar owner, and the addition of this hangar adds no additional aircraft or noise to the Airport or neighboring community.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign and Execute a New Hangar Lease at the Knox County Regional Airport for Dan Dufault. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

3. Act to Establish a Charter Review Sub-Committee to Review Charter Issues in the Operation of County Government and Administration and to Make Recommendations on Needed Charter Changes; this Sub-Committee will be Subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act.

This has been brought by past Commission and current Commission members and it was agreed that the subcommittee should be a manageable number and not too big. It was also discussed last night at

the Joint Budget Committee/Commission Joint meeting. Administrator Hart will provide more information at the meeting.

Discussion:

- **Administrator Hart** – The County adopted a Charter in 2004, which took effect in 2005. That Charter has been in place since then. We are going on eighteen (18) years of going by the same Charter. There are things in there that need to be updated and/or changed. One thing is that we have to send out the approved Budget to all Municipalities by certified mail which is a tremendous cost. We should look at sending this to the Municipalities by email instead. There was discussion of changing the makeup of the Commission from three (3) members to five (5) members. One thing to consider, is this an amendment or a revision. If it is an actual amendment then we would not have to establish a Charter Commission. The Commissioners would have to have a Public Hearing, and then it would go on the next November election to be voted on once the Public Hearing is held. The suggestion last week when the Budget Committee & Commission talked was it might make sense to have a Sub-Committee to come up with the actual changes that need to be made. In talking with legal counsel they said it would be helpful to them if had a list of what are the proposed changes. This way they could make a decision whether it's an amendment or revision. The revision is easier, but it's something we have to determine. As far as the Sub-Committee we have to decide the size of it. A couple Budget Committee members said they'd serve on it, and they said it would make sense to have a Commissioner on it. A suggestion was made to maybe have someone from APAC and maybe someone from the Dispatch Advisory Board or Executive Board. With those it gives you Public representation. People can certainly attend the meetings and have input, it will just be the actual Sub-Committee that makes the recommendations back to the Commission and then to the Attorney that will review it. We should discuss how to form a Sub-Committee and who will be on it.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I think it's a great idea. I think we should get moving on it as it's going to take a while to get through this and have it on the vote in November. I know it has a fairly compact timeline according to the State, but there are also things like printing ballots and things. I would imagine this Committee is going to contact every single Town with a copy of the Charter and say do you have any input? Does it make sense to have someone who was not originally on the Charter Committee? It seems like five (5) or seven (7) people are more than enough.
- **Administrator Hart** – I think it depends on how quick we can establish a Committee, we're in April right now. I'll check into it but if with the deadline we'd probably have to have something by August or September at the latest. I don't know if that is too quick. It might make sense to maybe look at the possibility of...do it too quick and rush through it or do we wait and do it at a slower pace and put it on the 2024 ballot? We would have more time and do it right. I'd be worried about doing it too fast and then we overlook a few things, we get it before the voters and realize oh we forgot about this or that.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – The argument against that is if you've got good people that are busy with others things, and don't want to commit to a year and a half of meetings.....we have to figure out how to put together a Committee like that and once that is in place give them a certain amount of leeway to look at this to determine a completion time. Then you can come back to the Commission and tell us how long it's going to take them. So the Charter is fifteen (15) pages. It's not that complicated it just needs some rewording of the State law.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – This is a good time because the Charter was formed in 2005 and we should review and make some changes to it. I do think it's time to visit the idea of having five (5) Commissioners so that we can talk to each other. Right now we cannot talk to each other outside of a Public meeting because it can be construed as a private meeting. It would be nice to have a couple additional Commissioners so we can have conversations and more broadly represent the County. I think it's a great idea to review all of this.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I do think that's where it comes in is having greater representation in the County. This way all the Towns feel they have somebody closer to them. The smaller Towns might get more of a voice on this Commission. It does have ramifications for APAC because there will no longer be three (3) Districts it will be five (5) Districts. It does filter down to other parts of the County if we do that.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – So how do we start the process? We can make an Act but where do we go from there?
 - **Administrator Hart** – I think it would be helpful to see what the Commissioners would like to see for a makeup. If it makes sense, there should be a Commissioner and then you need to decide if you want five (5) or seven (7). Who do you want on it for representation?
 - **Commissioner Pohlman** – We don't have to do decide that today, right?
 - **Administrator Hart** – No we don't.
 - **Commissioner Glaser** – Would we like to bring this back in next month with a more formal proposal? Like exactly how we want the structure of the Committee to be made up. How many members and what groups they represent.
 - **Commissioner Pohlman** – I think that would make more sense.
 - **Commissioner Glaser** – Can I meet with you and we'll talk more about it? (Directing the question to Administrator Hart.)
 - **Administrator Hart** – Sure.
 - **Commissioner Pohlman** – Can I vote for you to be the Commissioner to represent us? (Directing that question to Commissioner Glaser)
 - **Commissioner Glaser** – You don't have to vote for me I'm going to volunteer.
 - **Commissioner Parent** – I think if you're trying to do it quickly it means you have four (4) meetings to attend in a short period of time. That is a hard commitment for someone to commit to especially during the Summer months.
 - **Commissioner Glaser** – I am not disagreeing, maybe we leave it up to the members themselves. Have them meet and see how big the project is. I think we'll need legal advice as to whether the things that we are even considering are Charter revision or just amendments. If it's just amendments then just put them on the ballot and it's a fairly simple thing. If it's a revision then you go through this whole process of notifying all the Towns and we want as much input as we can get. Just because someone is not on the Committee doesn't mean they cannot be part of the discussion. They just won't have a final vote on what we submit to the voters. Not even what we submit to the voters they're going to submit something to the Commission, and the Commissioners are the only ones who are going to put something on the ballot. If anyone is listening to the and is interested contact either me or Administrator Hart about where we'd like to go or what your interest is. We won't vote on this today then. We'll put this off for a month.
 - **Administrator Hart** – Do you want to vote on this as far as agreeing to establish a Charter Review Sub-Committee? That was more or less why we put this on here. That was the suggestion at the Join meeting last week to have a Sub-Committee. You're not voting on members to the Sub-Committee that would be an Agenda item in May. Do you want to agree that you want to establish a Charter Review Sub-Committee?
 - **Commissioner Parent** – We can't really establish this not knowing the individuals involved.
 - **Administrator Hart** – I think that's
 - **Commissioner Parent** – We can agree to.....
 - **Commissioner Glaser** – All we're agreeing to is establishing a Committee, not necessarily what the Committee is. That will be the next part. It's almost an extra step but there's nothing wrong with it.
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- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Establish a Charter Review Subcommittee to Review Charter Issues in the Operation of County Government and Administration and to Make Recommendations on Needed Charter Changes; this Subcommittee will be Subject to the Maine Freedom of Access Act. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

V. Discussion Items

1. Update on Projects:

- **Administrator Hart** - The brick replacement/caulking replacement project at the Jail began this week. Initially they were looking at a couple months to finish it, and now we're closer to

eight (8) weeks. They're working inside the rec yard right now so there is a little more limitation to that. When they get to working on the exterior that is more public facing it will go quicker. They want to work 6-4:30 every day.

- The paving project we signed the contract. Hagar was hoping to start this week and Jim is waiting to hear back from them.
- **Airport Manager Shaw** mentioned the Benner Lane Hangars. The RFP has gone out for that. This was approximately ten (10) pages. This included the RFP and pictures of each Hangar with an explanation of each Hangar. We placed this in Village Soup, Pen Bay Pilot, on the County website and on MMA website. Airport Manager Shaw has provided the link to about twenty (20) people so far. That will come back before the Commissioners in the May meeting where it does not have to go the APAC.
- **Administrator Hart** – The Auditor that we had, James Wadman, indicated to us that they were not going to perform our Audit any longer. We had gone out to Bid and did not receive any. Administrator Hart had spoken to him at least six (6) times to try and beg and plead for him to come back. Each time he called they had a projected client they may hire for an Audit position, it kept falling through. Finally they hired someone to fill that position and told us they would continue to complete our Audit. We have had a fifteen (15) year working relationship with them.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I didn't see anything in the monthly update from the Airport as to how the Solar project is going.
- **Airport Manager Shaw** – The project is going well. Airport Manager Shaw spoke with the President of Pine Tree Solar this morning and also spoke with Stantec this morning. They are intending to move forward with the project as they have approved the contract. We had a few revisions that we made and we will work with them on those. We are still projecting a Summer construction date. There is a meeting this afternoon at 3:30 P.M.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – This is a question for Director Coombs about the EV car fire that happened recently. That has become an issue and it's very difficult to fight that kind of fire. Is there any opportunity or interest with our Municipal Aid Society or with our EMA Director and other EMA Directors to provide....or if something is in the works already?
- **Director Coombs** – I do not know if anything is in the works or not.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Have you taken a lot of calls on those types of fires?
- **Director Coombs** – Not yet.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I know it's an issue out there. I am wondering if there is an opportunity to do a County wide EV fire training for our Fire Departments or First Responders.
- **Director Coombs** – You may want to check with Fire Chief Whytock. He does a lot of the County training.
- **Administrator Hart** – He will be having a meeting with him soon and can ask that question.
- **Airport Manager Shaw** – Where the County has just closed an RFP for Electric Aircraft and Electric Vehicle Charging Station at the Knox County Airport, there may also be an opportunity to tie in that type of training in and help gather some funding.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Where there is a Federal push to use EV in the future it seems that this is a problem that is going to keep creeping up. Maybe we could find money through them, or ARPA or.....
- **Airport Manager Shaw** – We have identified alternate grant sources (MCOG & Stantec) of funding for the EV charging stations that rival what we would be using from Undesignated Surplus.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I have a question about the external requests that we get from non-profits. How do we put a policy in place for the Budget season so that we're dealing with it before it comes to us? This way we know what we're dealing with before we deal with it, and

we don't have to waste a lot of time at a Budget Meeting. Not just what the policy should be but how should we put it in place. Is this something we adopt as a Commission or do we ask Administrator Hart for guidance.

- **Administrator Hart** – So it's broken down into as far as the request, some are required by Statute for the County to fund, for instance Knox Lincoln Cooperative Extension. That is in the Statute, and Knox County funds a portion of that, and Lincoln County funds the other portion. We have Knox Lincoln Soil & Water and up until a couple years ago we had Midcoast Regional Planning Commission and MCEDD who is now MCOG. Those were the mainstays we always had requests for. Those are the ones the County has funded ever since I have been here. Then the Restorative Justice Project was something that was at one point funded with in the Sheriff's budget, and it is now part of those. We had a request last year from Penquis that we approved then decided not to approve. Also the Waldo County Transportation requested funding last year but was not approved. There was a discussion within the last five (5) to ten (10) years that the Budget Committee felt the Commissioners should decide what goes before voters to be considered for funding. We don't really have a policy. Some of those entities are turning to the County now because the Towns are saying we can't afford to fund anymore. Some of these we don't feel we should be funding because these have now changed from Municipal specific to a larger area. Some of the Budget Committee members & Commissioners may not support those because they don't really see the relation to the County.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – We all have slightly different view on how to do it. Is there something we can all agree on in a format? If it only serves two (2) Towns in the County, it's still not County-wide. If the Towns are already paying in to a group I think somebody at the Budget Committee will see it as a form of "double dipping", that we are taxing our Citizens twice, both on a County level and on a local level. It's not a reflection on whether they're not good or not, it's just that there isn't all the money in the world to do it. If we came up with a particular policy that said, they have to serve at least six (6) Towns in the County, or they have to not be getting money from the Towns. This would save the Budget Committee time so they don't have to look at these and say haven't we been through this before. Trying to simplify the process.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I agree with you. We need a more formalized process in place. This would make it clear as to the parameters in order to vie for funding from the County. Anybody can apply but they can be turned down. Nothing has been put in place as guidelines.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – It's probably because of the ARPA funding and the way that was done. We were asking Towns to submit something to the County, opened up this whole idea of, "oh the County is made out of money so we'll just write another letter and ask the County for more money." This is just sort of a way to say no this is not how we do it here.
- **Administrator Hart** – Yes we do have more informal than formal way of doing it. It is written down where they have to submit a letter requesting the funding, even the ones we fund every year they have to submit a letter indicating how much they are requesting, why they are requesting it, what area's do they serve, how many Knox County residents do they serve, the dollar value and they have to submit a Budget. So they have to at least provide those items I listed. I think with the new requests it the documentation provided didn't explain things that well. It was hard to determine if they were getting funding from other people. I can certainly check around and see what others have in place.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I'd be willing to meet with you and discuss this more, and run this by some members of the Budget Committee to get their input. They would probably want it as much as we do just to simplify the process. We can all agree that it is good groups doing good things, but that's not the point.

- **Administrator Hart** – The other thing is the Federal Government is cutting funding that they were giving to some of these groups so now it's either go to the State, your local County or Municipality.

VI. Other Business

None

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 2:57 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on May 9, 2023.