

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Tuesday – June 13, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.

The regular meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, June 13, 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, HR Manager Amber Christie, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Sheriff Patrick Polky, Chief Deputy Curt Andrick and Communications Director Robert Coombs.

Absent: Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin, 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.

Regular Meeting – Agenda **Tuesday – June 13, 2023 – 2:00 P.M.**

**** REVISED ****

- 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 May 9, 2023.
 - iii. Monthly Written Departmental Reports.
 - iv. Warrants
 - v. Reserve Withdrawals.

- IV. 2:10 Action Items**
 - 1. Act to Award the Bid for the Installation of Electric Aircraft and Vehicle Charging Stations at the Knox County Regional Airport.
 - 2. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Execute and Sign an Easement Agreement Between Knox County and Jeremy B. Shaw.
 - 3. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Sign the Concessionaire Agreement for Melissa Maker d/b/a M& M Real Estate Group to Lease Advertising and Counter Space in the Airport Terminal.
 - 4. Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign and Execute a New Hangar Lease at the Knox County Regional Airport for David Carter.
 - 5. Act to Approve the Revised Airport Aircraft Parking Program.
 - 6. Act to Approve the Revised Airport Vehicle Parking Program.
 - 7. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Enter Into the Purchase and Sales Agreement With the Town of Owls Head to Sell the Cemetery Property Located at the Knox County Regional Airport in the Amount of \$21,000.
 - 8. Act to Award the Bid for the Rehabilitation of the Benner Lane Apron, Flying Club Apron, and Long-Term Auto Parking Lot at the Knox County Regional Airport to Sitewerx Inc. of Hermon, Maine for the Base Bid Amount of \$647,600.00, Plus the Alternate 1 Bid Amount for \$373,750.00 for a Total of \$1,021,350.00.
 - 9. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator and Sheriff to Sign an Agreement Between Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multi-County Jail Authority, Knox County, and Waldo County to Form a District 6 Collaboration to Share Correctional Resources.
 - 10. Act to Approve Members of the 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. Discussion of County Properties Identified for Potential Sale.
 2. Discuss Planning and Economic Development (Outside Agency) Request Funding Policy.
 3. Update on Projects.
 4. Other Items.
- VI. 2:35 Other Business**
- VII. Adjourn**
- VII. 2:40 Other Business**
- VIII. 2:45 Executive Session**
1. Convene in Executive Session to Discuss a Personnel Matter Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A).
- IX. Adjourn**

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Glaser called the regular meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 2:07 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 May 9, 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 Award the Bids for the Installation of Electric Aircraft and Vehicle Charging Stations at the Knox County Regional Airport.

On March 13th, a Request for Proposals was published to seek proposals to design and install charging stations for both vehicles and aircraft at the Knox County Airport. The investment aligns with the County's goals of operating an airport that is as environmentally sensitive and sustainable as possible. Three electric aircraft manufacturers are looking at the opportunity to use our Airport to prove their technology and train pilots. Two (2) proposers' submitted proposals, Revision Energy and BETA Technologies in conjunction with locally based Hedstrom Electric. The APAC, at their May 8th meeting unanimously recommended that the Knox County Commission award the contract to BETA Technologies of Burlington, Vermont in the amount of \$569,840. The County has also applied for a Northern Border Regional Commission Catalyst Grant to offset installation costs.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Award the Bids for the Installation of Electric Aircraft and Vehicle Charging Stations at the Knox County Regional Airport. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

2. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Execute and Sign an Easement Agreement Between Knox County and Jeremy B. Shaw.

Jeremy Shaw owns property for his own personal residential use at 14 Gigi's Place, accessed by a private right-of-way held by Knox County that begins from Ash Point Drive and extends eastward beyond the Shaw lot. This Easement Agreement conveys a transferable access easement over that right-of-way and sets out the terms of that Agreement, including that no structures will be permanently installed above the ground, the right-of-way may be improved and maintained as a gravel roadway, the County reserves the right to use the property for any manner and purpose that does not interfere with the easement, and the County reserves all rights to the airspace above the easement and the right to generate noise, vibrations, dust, fumes and other effects of Airport operation. Jeremy agrees to indemnify the County for all claims against the County arising out of his use of the easement.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Execute and Sign an Easement Agreement Between Knox County and Jeremy B. Shaw. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

3. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Sign the Concessionaire Agreement for Melissa Maker d/b/a M & M Real Estate Group to Lease Advertising and County Space in the Airport Terminal.

With the departure of Beacon Drones LLC, the front counter space adjacent to the Cape Air ticket desk is now vacant. Melissa Maker and Maggie Tinker, d/b/a M&M Real Estate Group have requested to lease the space for promoting their Real Estate Agency for transient passengers and visitors to the Knox County Airport. They intend to staff the front desk during the busier periods of the year, and install a very tasteful advertisement for visitors in the Arrivals Corridor where passengers arriving in Rockland will be welcomed with a coastal scene that will advertise local real estate offerings.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Sign the Concessionaire Agreement for Melissa Maker d/b/a M & M Real Estate Group to Lease Advertising and County Space in the Airport Terminal. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

4. Act to Approve and Authorize the Chair to Sign and Execute a New Hangar Lease at the Knox County Regional Airport for David Carter.

David Carter has requested to build a new hangar adjacent to the Benner Lane Hangar Complex in accordance with the 2015 Master Plan. The area is not near the disputed Resource Protection Area currently under review by the Court. Mr. Carter is the new Aircraft Conservator for the Owls Head Transportation Museum, and lives in Nobleboro. Mr. Carter submitted a bid for a Benner Lane Hangar, but was outbid. Permitting of Mr. Carter's hangar is being heard at the Town of Owls Head's June 12th, Planning Board Meeting. David Carter's hangar will be identified as hangar #59, and is shown on the Benner Lane Hangar Complex Exhibit A.

- *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 David Carter. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

5. **Act to Approve the Revised Airport Aircraft Parking Program.**

Administrator Hart has included a redlined version for your review. These were edited based on the evolving dynamic associated with the growth of the Airport during a routine review of the program. The changes revolved around who is paid, and removing the section regarding other Airport partners collecting revenue (that they don't do, nor would we ever ask them to do for our parking program). Payments were being sent to the Treasurer and the Airport, and we streamlined it to the Airport for these types of payments, because we maintain all of the logs to refer the payment back to.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve the Revised Airport Aircraft Parking Program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

6. **Act to Approve the Revised Airport Vehicle Parking Program.**

Administrator Hart has included a redlined version for your review. These were edited based on the evolving dynamic associated with the growth of the Airport during a routine review of the program. The changes revolved around who is paid, and removing the section regarding other airport partners collecting revenue (that they don't do, nor would we ever ask them to do for our parking program). Payments were being sent to the Treasurer and the Airport, and we streamlined it to the Airport for these types of payments, because we maintain all of the logs to refer the payment back to.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve the Revised Airport Vehicle Parking Program. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

7. **Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Enter Into the Purchase and Sales Agreement With the Town of Owls Head to Sell the Cemetery Property Located at the Knox County Regional Airport in the Amount of \$21,000.**

The County Administrator and Airport Manager have been discussing with the Town of Owls Head the conveyance of the cemetery located at the Airport to the Town. The Town and the County have shared the cost of a survey (prepared by Gartley & Dorsky) to properly describe the cemetery property and of an appraisal (by Fred Bucklin). The survey and appraisal are available for review. The appraisal supports a fair market value of \$21,000, and the Federal Aviation Administration requires the County to use that value in establishing a sale price for the cemetery property. The FAA has approved this sale so long as the County reserves aviation easements to protect flight paths by restricting the height of trees, vegetation and structures on the property. Perkins Thompson has prepared a draft purchase and sale agreement (attached), and it includes a purchase price of \$21,000 and reservation of the necessary aviation easements. This item authorizes the County Administrator to sign the purchase and sale agreement. The Town then will bring that agreement to a Town meeting for approval of the purchase and for appropriation of the funds.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator to Enter Into the Purchase and Sales Agreement With the Town of Owls Head to Sell the Cemetery Property Located at the Knox County Regional Airport in the Amount of \$21,000. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

8. Act to Award the Bid for the Rehabilitation of the Benner Lane Apron, Flying Club Apron, and Long-Term Auto Parking Lot at the Knox County Regional Airport to Sitewerx Inc. of Hermon, Maine for the Base Bid Amount of \$647,600.00, Plus the Alternate 1 Bid Amount for \$373,750.00 for a Total of \$1,021,350.00

The paving project at the Knox County Airport was saved until the very end of the project list to spend any remaining funds prior to the expiration of the CARES Act money. The larger project was planned to pave a runway or the entire Flying Club area, however, due to rising costs, unforeseen expenses and project delays, the planned \$1.5 Million dollars dwindled down to several hundred thousand dollars. During the planning phase of the CARES Act funds, the County did not yet own the Benner Lane Hangar complex. Now that the County owns the facility, the pavement is now the worst conditioned pavement at the Airport. Also, during the construction of the Terminal Hangar, the heavy equipment needed to construct the hangar degraded the pavement enough to require a rehabilitation of the parking lot. With the limited remaining funds available, the decision was made to incorporate a small portion of the Flying Club too, to repair the entire heavily damaged pavement at the Airport. The County put the project out for bid, and two (2) bids were received. Sitewerx Inc. of Hermon was the only responsive bidder. The County's Consultant, Stantec, and the Airport Manager recommend awarding the bid to Sitewerx Inc. of Hermon, Maine, in the amount of the Base Bid of \$647,600.00, plus the Alternate 1 bid of \$373,750.00.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Parent to Act to Award the Bid for Rehabilitation of the Benner Lane Apron, Flying Club Apron, and Long-Term Auto Parking Lot at the Knox County Regional Airport to Sitewerx Inc. of Hermon, Maine for the Base Bid Amount of \$647,600.00, Plus the Alternate 1 Bid Amount for \$373,750.00 for a Total of \$1,021,350.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pohlman. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

9. Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator and Sheriff to Sign an Agreement Between Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multi-County Jail Authority, Knox County, and Waldo County to Form a District 6 Collaboration to Share Correctional Resources.

Attached is the agreement. This agreement has been reviewed by legal counsel and has been agreed to by Lincoln, Waldo, and Sagadahoc County so far and approved to be signed. It now comes before the Knox County Commission to approve and authorize the County Administrator to sign. The Sheriff has already signed the agreement. This is the start of a collaborative effort between the four (4) counties that comprise Maine Prosecutorial District 6, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, and Waldo. The foreseeable outcome that the working group, composed of leaders from the 4 counties, sees for this agreement is the ability to better serve our communities. Each county will gain access to resources and services that they may not have had otherwise, be able to solve current and future issues with peers who are facing the same challenges, and the ability to focus on specific sets of needs versus trying to address all needs.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve and Authorize the County Administrator and Sheriff to Sign an Agreement Between Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multi-County Jail Authority, Knox County, And Waldo Count to Form a District 6 Collaboration to Share Correctional Resources. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

10. Act to Approve Members of the 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.

Included in your packet is a memo from Administrator Hart to the Commission providing the listing of individuals who expressed an interest in being considered to serve on the Knox County Charter Review Subcommittee. Copies have been included of what they submitted to Administrator Hart for your review. We can discuss this further at the meeting.

- *A motion was made by Commissioner Pohlman to Act to Approve Members of the 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 members are as follows: Chair Edward Glaser, Budget Committee Member Charles Grover, Budget Committee Member Bob Duke, Budget Committee Member John Mountainland, Knox County Employee Amber Christie, Former Charter Committee Member Jim Bowers and Former Charter Committee Member Gordon Page. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Parent. A vote was taken with all in favor.*

V. Discussion Items

1. Discussion of County Properties Identified for Potential Sale.

- **Administrator Hart** – Previously Commissioners met in June 2022, and authorized Administrator Hart and Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager to look at potential properties. The cemetery was one (1) property that was looked at and we are actually finalizing that. The other three (3) properties are a partial land which is ½ acres on Ash Point, adjacent to the Ash Point Inn. Another parcel is a ½ and acre on Crocketts Beach Road. The last parcel is on Dublin Road behind the Flying Club, and that is about ½ acres. Administrator Hart did send an email to two representatives of the FAA, and copied Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager and Jim Katsiaticas, Legal Counsel. This was to have a discussion of what was required from the FAA, similar to what we had to do for the cemetery. We are going to have a follow up, maybe a virtual meeting with two (2) representatives of the FAA, Jeremy Shaw, Jim Katsiaticas and Administrator Hart to talk about those three (3) properties and what the next steps are. At this point, we wanted to mention there are some properties but we wanted to get some information. We would then have to come back to the Commission if we decide to move forward on those.
- **Commissioner Parent** – How big is the parcel on Crocketts Beach Road?
- **Administrator Hart** – It is a half an acre.
- **Commissioner Parent** – Ok, so none of those are really big enough to develop on other than the last one.
- **Administrator Hart** – The one on Ash Point Inn is ½ acres and the one on Dublin Road behind the Flying Club is 1-2 acres.
- **Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager** – Really the reason why we did this is because the Commission tasks us with finding other properties that we could get back on tax roles with the Town of Owls Head as another “good will” gesture. We’re happy to keep the property but there is a lot of property that we don’t need. If it would benefit the Town of Owls Head, and it’s the will of the Commissioners then I don’t know why we wouldn’t undertake that. The Crocketts Beach property, the gentleman really wanted seven (7) feet. His original request was for seven (7) feet so he could build an additional room. Then he said he wanted to make his land a conforming lot. These are all discussion we will have with the FAA. The catalyst for these discussions was the interest that was generated. There

are other properties that could be beneficial to the Town of Owls Head. We are happy to chase down any information and vet it to the FAA and legal, and then come back to the Commission on what you would like to do. It continues to extend the “good will” that we are trying to work with the Town of Owls Head to show them that we are not just an expansive organization. We are responsible.

- **Commissioner Glaser** – These are pieces of property that we own, so if we sold them we would do it through a bid process, and whatever we got for it then we could sell. Or would we have to because it belongs to the Airport and have to go through the whole assessment thing.
- **Administrator Hart** – We would have to do an appraisal and survey. When we did the cemetery, we owned it but the Town wanted it so the Town agreed to share the cost of that. Some of the individuals that about this would be willing to pay, but the problem is we have to put this out to Public bid. The County would have to pay for the appraisal and survey. We could recoup that cost from the sale of the property. The other thing is the appraisal is going to give us a minimum bid of what we’re going to ask for the property. We really need to set a base line of what are we going to ask for this. Until we have an appraisal we don’t know what its worth. Plus the FAA will require the appraisal and survey.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – So one of these properties could be worth \$20,000 and no one is willing to pay that. We will have spent a certain amount of money to find out that nobody wants to buy it. Unless we try to find a way to sell it or give it to the Town of Owls Head directly.
- **Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager** – The FAA wouldn’t allow that because we need to recover fair market value. Especially if this was something that was purchased with Federal funds. With the unique situation we are in now, is that we do have an active audience of people that are willing to pay something. If we picked a random parcel that we knew there wasn’t any interest in then that would be an unreasonable expense. These individuals all have interest. Yes the risk is always out there, but there is genuine interest.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – So these pieces aren’t arbitrary pieces? These are abutting neighbors (inaudible).
- **Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager** – Correct.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – There had been some discussion about pieces of property that could develop for a fire station. This wouldn’t include any of that.
- **Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager** – That is correct.

2. Discuss Planning and Economic Development (Outside Agency) Request Funding Policy.

- **Administrator Hart** – We discussed this at the last meeting and then provided the Commission an email that was sent to Commissioner Pohlman and Commissioner Parent because I had already discussed this with Commissioner Glaser. A sample letter that we send to each of the agencies was provided, budgets and the last page is the same letter but if it was a new applicant is let them know what we were seeking. There are eighteen (18) municipalities in Knox County and it was decided upon that if funding was being requested, they had to serve at least nine (9) municipalities. This letter is just a suggestion of wording. If you all agree then this would be sent off to the Budget Committee for approval. Then we could start requesting that going forward. No one really has a policy its more “yah we will or won’t fund this”. The County has to look at this collectively with 40,000 residents, how it benefits the taxpayers of Knox County. Or is this a duplicate of the services provided to multiple municipalities of Knox County. I talked to Chair Glaser about having a discussion at the Quarterly Meeting with the Budget Committee.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I appreciate your work on this. I think it sounds good. I support the process of moving forward. I like the designation of at least nine (9) Counties which is 50%. I think it's pretty clear of what it will take to apply, and I think that will eliminate....well it will provide clarity, a process and eliminate a lot of those questions. This will make our job easier.

3. Update on Projects

- **Administrator Hart** – I have three (3) Projects to discuss.
- Courthouse Caulking/Maintenance Repair project – Knowles Industrial Services who has currently finished the Jail. They were supposed to start on the Courthouse next week and they contacted me and said can we put it off until the end of the summer. This is due to they are purchasing a new piece of equipment that will be used on the North elevation (side facing the Community Center). They have some type of staging where they can go up 190 feet in the air. This way they won't have to dig into the lawn area. They are also dealing with staffing and they also do a scheduled shut down during this time period. We're not under any time crunch here like we were at the Jail. An email was sent out to the Courthouse staff. The plan is to start in the East elevation and then they'll work out front, do the front steps, then they'll do the North elevation and then they will end with the West elevation. This will take 7-8 weeks to complete.
- Jail – Knox County Public Safety Building Paving Project – They started this week and then they tore up all sidewalks at the Jail area, and grubbed out the area which is going to be the walkway around the Jail. We are required by the DOC to have that so they can observe outside and around the recreation areas. The only change with that was initially it was a four (4) foot walkway, and by ADA standard it has to be five (5) feet. They will start reclaiming the parking lot starting Thursday or Friday.
- Jail Brick/Mortar Repair/Replacement Project – This was completed on Monday. Jim did a walk thru with Knowles, and there were a few small items that needed attention. When they start the Courthouse, they'll send a couple of guys over there to fix those items. They did a lot of additional items and this project went really well.

4. Other Items

- **Administrator Hart** - We did lock in our heating fuel for the 2023-2024 seasons. We are at \$2.715 for home delivery, that's compared to \$3.755 last year. Tanker loads we locked in at \$2.715 Heating Fuel, we locked Propane in at \$1.575 and last year we were at \$1.66. This is with Maritime Energy.
- **Administrator Hart** – Fire Chief Chris Farley is on the Knox County Communications Executive Board. He notified us on Sunday that he's going to step down. He was appointed to the Board of Directors for Maine Fire Chiefs Association. Jesse Thompson who is an EMS rep and the Ambulance Director in Union is currently the Vice Chair so he will assume the duties of Chief Farley. We are in the process of trying to schedule a User Group meeting because they need to nominate a replacement for Chief Farley. As soon as they do that would come to the Commissioners to appoint that representative. This would be to fill the unexpired term which goes until December 31, of 2024. This will most likely be at the July meeting.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Well that’s disappointing to hear. Bob did you want to comment on any of the changes?
- **Bob Coombs, Communication Director** – No I just came down to let you know I still care (laughing). People move on things happen and I’m hoping the change is for the good.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Are you still down a number of Dispatchers and how many.
- **Bob Coombs, Communications Director** – We are down six (6) Dispatchers right now.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – That is significant. You are down 60%. I want to recognize and thank you once again for the work that you are doing. I know there’s been a lot of calls and multi departmental things going on. I hope down the road there may be some discussion for collaborations of some sort that might ease some of your shortages.
- **Bob Coombs, Communications Director** – One of the big things and it’s a nationwide thing is we’re getting a lot of abandoned 911 calls. If the person doesn’t stay on the line then we have to call you back. That ties Dispatchers up.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – You mentioned that before and that is a really important point. I think that we as a body as a County have a service to make people aware.
- **Bob Coombs, Communications Director** – I am working on a pamphlet that we can put on the website. The NENA group also has approached the cell phones companies. One of them is saying they’re going to push out updates to the phones but that’s only good if people update their phones.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I would like to open the start of a discussion as we move into the 2024 Budget we have set meeting with the Budget Committee and the Commission all in advance of the final vote. In the six (6) years that I’ve been a Commissioner I’ve noticed that some of our departments are larger consumers of the Budget than others. As things get more complicated with many of our departments it might be beneficial to all of us and particularly the Budget Committee who isn’t as involved on a day-to-day basis as we are with the department’s heads. I think it would be really helpful if we could propose that some of our largest Budget consumers (75% of the Budget) EMA, Sheriff’s Dept., Communications, Corrections and perhaps Maintenance we have four (4) specific meetings between the Budget Committee, Commission, Department heads and Andy. These would be in advance of all the other meetings so we can really delve into questions about what are the costs, why are these being asked for where are the opportunities to make cuts, if we make these cuts are we going to jeopardize essential services and so forth. This way we can work collaboratively together to craft a Budget that works, and will cover the needs of the County. I would like to propose we devote more time to doing this.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Would these be meetings and include the Budget Committee?
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Absolutely as they are an essential part of the Budget. I’m proposing a joint meeting between the Budget Committee, the Commissioners, Department Heads and Andy.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – And this would be at the very beginning so.....there really are no beginning stages of the Budget. We should be finding a way to work more collaboratively with Departments so it isn’t just a hard and fast Budget. Really that’s the Administrations job to come to us with new things. Are we mucking things up if we do too much?
- **Commissioner Pohlman** - What I was actually thinking is that these meetings would occur after Andy and the Department Head had a chance to run through the Budget. Traditionally, if I’m not mistaken, Andy works through the Budget with the Department Heads and then each of the Departments come to us and we review it.
- **Administrator Hart** – Yes. The Department Managers usually have their Budgets end of August beginning of September, then Kathy and I meet with the Department Managers usually for a whole week, then we have a meeting with the Departments Managers and Commission. Then we started the Joint Meetings with the Budget Committee and

Commissioner together. We've actually moved that further out because what we found is by starting earlier, we didn't have all the information (benefits). We used to start in early October. We used to have 6-7 meetings and now we're down to 4-5 Joint meetings.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** - The reason why I've targeted these Departments is because the collectively represent a bulk of the Budget and there is a lot of time, effort and thought that goes in to these Budgets. We're doing a disservice if we lump them all together in just one session. There are reasons behind some of these things, and there's an opportunity for the Budget Committee to delve a little bit deeper into the Budget. I think this could ultimately result in a better outcome and a better Budget. We could allocate each Department an hour to come in and talk about where they're at and why they're looking to do certain things.
- **Administrator Hart** – I understand some frustration with this. There have been a couple instances where the Budget Committee has not inquired a lot about Department Budgets or hasn't raised concerns. Then we get in to the last night at the Public Hearing and then they make suggestions of why don't we cut this Budget by \$90,000 because we don't agree with the increase. There's never anything said when the Department Head is here during the other meetings. I would have to say the Budget Committee doesn't really want to meet a lot. At times they don't seem totally engaged. I don't know the answer to that. I guess when the Department meets with Kathy and I if they have a request, we usually ask for information that supports their request. I think the Commissioners are more apt to support the Budget in its entirety.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – My frustration over the years has been that there has been less than full engagement in more than one (1) of our Budgets over the years between the Budget Committee Members. My feeling is, it's a responsibility, a big job and I understand if they're tasked with keeping the Budget without excessive spending. We are all focused on that goal. We all pay taxes, we're all voting increase on ourselves but at the end of the day some things we can kick down the road like road maintenance and in the end, it ends up costing us more. As a Budget Committee member, you are signing on to that, you have a responsibility to do your due diligence in representing to the best of your ability by preparing yourself to the best of your ability to represent that Community that you're working with. I think that does involve some extra meetings because our Budgets are getting more complex, they do increase and I think that if the Budget Committee member doesn't want to commit to it then they shouldn't be a Budget Committee member. In the past six (6) years as being a Commissioner we generally come to consensus. Last year was a glaring exception to that, it was really ugly. To me that spoke as an opportunity to really change, and it's imperative on our Commissioners, and each Budget Committee member to do our due diligence and meet with the Department Heads either in a meeting, separately or both. This is to make sure we all understand what is being asked and why.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I think the Commission in general backs the County Administrator and the Departments in terms of what Budget they propose. We hired you to do that, and most of that work is to figure out how to best spend that money, how to keep the Budget realistic. We get the proposals; we hear what's going on but we're not really there during the process of developing the Budget and I think the Budget Committee feels that too. So when it's given to them it already is (inaudible). They might all have other ideas, great ideas to cut the Budget and the way the process is the reason they are not engaged is because they feel that it's feudal. It's being presented to them and there is nothing they can do. No matter how many times they think well the Budget is too big nobody's coming forward with stuff to help them deal with that. I think if some of them were involved in seeing what the process is a little earlier it might help. That might be part of the solution. If you want to cut the Budget you don't just nickel and dime around the edges, you figure out what services you want to cut. We don't know nearly as well as the Department Heads and Administrator how much it

really costs to develop things. The question is, at what point do we become part of the process, and do we insert ourselves or insert the Budget Committee? I think what you're saying is let's speed that up so we get into it a little earlier.

- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Charles Gover, he has a wealth of experience and many of the people on our Budget Committee bring huge financial backgrounds. I was really sorry to lose Barry Norris. To be able to involve them earlier so they feel engaged, feel like they have a voice and they are able to make a difference together. We can also benefit from their experience that they bring to the table.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Again, I don't know how that's mucking up things. I'm more than happy to go to more meetings. We'd be asking Department Managers to go to more meetings and justify things more.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I understand. The last thing I want to do is add more meetings so I don't know what the solution is. We have to figure out some other way of moving things forward.
- **Administrator Hart** - What if we have a meeting scheduled August 10th for a Joint Quarterly meeting with the Budget Committee, what if we talked at that meeting about this. That way we can get their thoughts too. Then in the October meeting when we have the Department Managers come in present their Budget to the Commissioners, what if we invite the Budget Committee to that meeting. We could change the time to accommodate the Budget Committee. That is two (2) things we could consider.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Certainly, the more we get them involved in discussing the process the better outcome we will have.
- **Administrator Hart** – One of the things we had done in the past is for the HVAC project we invited the Commissioners and Budget Committee with Siemens to do a tour of the building to fully understand why we needed to do the upgrade. We did this at the Jail too. By engaging them it's just helpful if they're willing to come to see it.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – In a small organization, people have a way of doing their things makes a big difference. If you have nine (9) Budget Committee members are all engaged, all are interested and they can be at every meeting then you have a whole different group. Whatever you guys work out; I am more than happy to support.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – I actually like Andy's suggestion. Rather than telling the Budget Committee, make them inclusive and work together. I like the idea for the August 10th meeting. Not everybody is on the same page and not everybody has the same level of commitment.
- **Commissioner Parent** – I'm having trouble hearing.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – If there is unhappiness with the Budget Process what are the steps we can take to try to make it better?
- **Commissioner Parent** – That'll shed some light on it. Whether or not it's anything we can fix remains to be seen. If the Budget Committee had more involvement in the whole Budget process it would probably help them. It would help us as well. We need to get together with the Budget Committee at some time and discuss it with them.
- **Administrator Hart** – I will get something out to the Budget Committee for the August 10th meeting.
- **Jeremy Shaw, Airport Manager** – Just wanted to thank District Attorney Natasha Irving for helping us secure that last 3 million dollars of funding. We were notified if we didn't have it wrapped up by that day, we'd lose it.

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 4:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on July 11, 2023.