

KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

Special Meeting

Tuesday – August 15, 2023 – 4:30 P.M.

The Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission was held on Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 4:30 P.M., at the County Courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine.

Commission members present were: Edward B. Glaser, Commissioner District #1 and Richard L. Parent, Jr., Commissioner District #2.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart and HR Manager Amber Christie.

Absent: Administrative Assistant Wendy Galvin

Others: Finance Director Kathy Robinson, EMA Director Candice Richards, Security & Operations Coordinator Shawn Wallace, Chief Deputy Curt Andrick, Patrol Administrator Paul Pinkham, Jail Administrator Robert Wood, Airport Manager Jeremy Shaw, Communications Director Robert Coombs, Prosecutorial Assistant/Investigator Shane Riley, Register of Probate Elaine Hallett, Register of Deeds Madelene Cole, and District Attorney Natasha Irving.

Special Meeting – Agenda

Tuesday – August 15, 2023 – 11:30 A.M.

Town Hall Streams link:

https://townhallstreams.com/stream.php?location_id=50&id=54520

I. 4:30 Meeting Called to Order

II. 4:31 Public Comment

III. 4:31 Executive Session

1. Convene in Executive Session for Consultations With Legal Counsel Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(E).

IV. Adjourn

I. Meeting Called to Order

Commissioner Glaser called the Special Meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 4:34 P.M.

II. Public Comment

- **Public** - Just curious if there's an update to the plan moving forward that we received last night. If there isn't, then we're collectively looking for direction on how we proceed with moving forward. We have some concerns with the email we got last night.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I don't have anything I can add to it at this point, and I don't think any of the Commission does.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Since it was written by Andy, I think he's the best person to address.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – Yes, if he'd be willing to.
- **Administrator Hart** – I am working on a draft for an update plan to come out tonight, after this meeting. It's not finalized because I had quite a few things going on today. I'll have that out as soon as I'm finished with this meeting.
- **Camden & Rockport Police Chief Randy Gagne** - Is there any plan to accelerate your timeline, because we cannot wait until Friday to find out if we're going to be 911 or what's going to happen. We need to be able to put measures into place before Friday.
- **Administrator Hart** – Yes
- **Rockland Police Chief Tim Carroll** – We're here more just because of the critical issue that it is regarding the safety of the people of Knox County. I know Andy & Zach's been working on it; we need a plan as to what's going to happen. The deadline is Monday at 6 A.M. but we're just here to express

our thoughts and how critical this is. We need some direction sooner rather than later. It is a matter of safety for the people of Knox County. We are all willing to help we just need to see where the County is at, and how we go forward from here. The County holds the key.

- **Camden Fire Chief Chris Farley** – I would say that it's the communities Communication center because we all pay a user fee to have a service. We don't know if that service is going to continue next week. We don't know if it's going to continue tomorrow, and we can't wait any longer. We need answers. I get that this is a complex situation, but we deserve answers. We deserve truthful answers.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Thank you. I agree with all of your comments. It's up to us to quickly come to resolutions.
- **Commissioner Glaser** – I will say as soon as the County Administrator comes up with a plan that he's happy with and that seems to meet all of your needs, and as soon as it comes to us for our signature all of us are willing to meet at a moment's notice.
- **Commissioner Parent** – We all want to see this end asap.
- **Camden & Rockport Police Chief Randy Gagne** – I am calling Verizon this morning to see if I can get redundancy on cell phones should I have to call my officers directly in their cars. That probably will work for the police departments, but I will not speak for the fire departments. We are in a critical state. I know people have been working on this around the clock. We need to go back and tell our managers, councils and selectboards is the dispatch center closing? If the calls have to come to my cell phone and I have to call my officers that's what's going to happen. I'm sure you understand the criticalness of it. This is the situation we are in, and we should have never been in this situation. How we go here I don't know.
- **Public** – Our infrastructure has been deleted long ago to be able to dispatch on our own. When the County took things over in the early 2000's everybody pulled radios and communications out of their fire houses because the County had control. Right now, we physically can't do it. This is an unbelievable position we are in. This is sad, pathetic, and without direction we have no where to go. It's just not as easy as flipping a switch for us.
- **Commissioner Pohlman** – Has our IT Director Zach been working with you? I see Police Chief Carroll shaking his head. Has he been talking about systems that can be put in place?
- **Public** – Yes, we've had conversations. I feel like Zach will be pivotal in making this go forward if this get dumped in our laps. We're trying to scrape together that time to be able to make that happen. So yes, he has been in contact with us. If this gets pushed towards us, we can't do this without him.
- **Rockland Police Chief Carroll** – With his background and knowledge in Dispatch and him coming to the IT/ technical side nobody is more important today than Zach. He's the one that can put that piece together. What happens at 7 A.M. Monday morning when that critical call comes in. What's going to happen to that 911 call, it goes to Belfast automatically. We have been told Belfast does not have the structure, they can maybe tone it out, and maybe get some communication out (inaudible). What happens at that hour? We need to have answers for the Public.
- **Public** – That's the big piece. We know if the plan includes going to Waldo, going to Sagadahoc, going to State police that legally those 911 calls have to be answered. What happens after that is unfortunately up to us if the County closed the door. I still say it falls back on the County to produce, but at the end of the day we know that's not going to happen.
- **Camden Fire Chief Farley** – We are ready to do it. We obviously need some help. We are going to do it if the County doesn't do it. As Chief Gagne said, it just blows my mind to where we are.
- **Camden & Rockport Police Chief Randy Gagne** – We're the fortunate Communities, we have Police and Fire.
- **Camden Fire Chief Farley** – What are they doing in Washington, Appleton and Friendship? Just can't believe it.

III. Executive Session

1. Convene in Executive Session for Consultations With Legal Counsel Pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(E).

The executive session convened at 4:49 P.M.

The executive session concluded at 6:05 P.M.

III. 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 special meeting adjourned at 6:07 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Galvin
Administrative Assistant

The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at their regular meeting held on September 12, 2023.