

***Sagadahoc County Commissioners
Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2015***

A regular meeting of the Sagadahoc County Commissioners was held at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 10th, 2015 in the Commissioners' Meeting Room of the County Courthouse, 752 High Street, Bath, Maine 04530.

Present: County of Sagadahoc Commissioners: Mr. Charles Crosby, III, Chair, Ms. Carol Grose, Vice Chair, Mr. Max Dawson
Pamela Hile, County Administrator; Eric Sawyer, EMA Director; Marla Davis, Public Health Officer; Malcolm Ulmer; Jason Shedlock, Deputy EMA Director

Chair Crosby called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. and established the presence of a quorum.

The following consent agenda was submitted for consideration:

- 1. Approval of Minutes for February 10, 2015
- 2. Approval of Warrants
- 3. February Financial Statements
- 4. Departmental Reports (Written)
- 5. Upcoming Meeting(s):
 - a.) Regular Meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14, 2015
 - b.) Joint Budget Meeting with BAC at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, March 13, 2015
 - c.) Special Budget Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17, 2015
 - d.) Meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 24, 2015 IF NEEDED

Upon MOTION by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONS

1. Board of Health – Marla Davis, Sagadahoc County Public Health Officer

Marla Davis, volunteer Public Health Officer for Sagadahoc County began her presentation by thanking the Commissioners for their past support of and interest in public health. Ms. Davis referred to the Board of Health Annual Report (attached). After fielding questions from the Board on housing and homelessness issues across the county, Ms. Davis then discussed the Board of Health's concern with two specific proposals in the upcoming Maine state budget. Ms. Davis relayed the Board of Health's concern that the Fund for a Healthy Maine, responsible for prevention and education efforts in the community, will be de-funded in the Governor's current proposal. Ms. Davis highlighted the many benefits of prevention work, especially as they pertain to tobacco use cessation, drug abuse prevention and general nutrition and healthy living education. Ms. Davis asked for the Board's support in voicing concern about the possible effects of the proposal. The Board unanimously agreed that this is a critical issue. The Board tasked Ms. Davis and EMA staff to draft testimony on behalf of the Commissioners to submit to the appropriate committees in Augusta to ensure that Sagadahoc County is on the

record in supporting the Fund for a Healthy Maine. Ms. Davis also explained the impact of ongoing issues surrounding the Public Health Nursing Program, including understaffing and a decreased focus at the state level. The Commissioners shared Ms. Davis' concern and instructed her to provide more information on the issue to fuel discussion at a later date.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board authorized the drafting of testimony on behalf of the board on the issues surrounding the Fund for a Healthy Maine.**

2. Malcolm Ulmer – Self-Funded Insurance

Malcolm Ulmer briefed the Board on the progress in gaining more detail on a proposal for Sagadahoc County to fund their own health insurance, rather than continue with the current option provided by Maine Municipal. Mr. Ulmer highlighted the benefits of the proposed self-funding plan. They include: a projected cost decrease in county funding commitments, substantially similar coverage to the current plan, administered by a nationally-experienced company (Meritain), increased ease of obtaining loss information and a freezing of premiums until March of 2016, rather than after open season ending January 2016.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board authorized County administrative staff to proceed with the proposed self-funding plan and select a date for implementation.**

DEPARTMENT REPORTS (Presentations)

1. Sheriff's Department – Sheriff Joel Merry

Sheriff Merry was joined by Chief Deputy Strout and Lieutenant Stewart and presented the new Sagadahoc County Sheriff flag. It will serve as a source of pride and will be flown at various events to heighten awareness of the Sheriff's Office.

Sheriff Merry continued his presentation by discussing the status of the County jail system in Sagadahoc County and throughout Maine. The Board of Corrections, suffering from a lack of support at the state level, is now defunct. The Sheriff's Association supports a bill in the state legislature to repeal the Board of Corrections and return control of corrections to the counties. The major obstacle being discussed is how to adequately fund the jail system moving forward. Sheriff Merry assured the Board of Commissioner's that our County jail – Two Bridges – should remain solvent as long as our partnerships stay in place and we continue to house inmates from other counties. Commissioner Dawson expressed his concern that the county will be forced to increase taxes to fund the jail. Administrator Hile added that no one wants to lift the cap on jail-related property taxes. Commissioner Grose inquired about the Governor's view on the jail system. Sheriff Merry answered that the state taking over the jail system would be seen as expanding government, or there is an alternative option to privatize. Commissioner Grose asked about the option to privatize. Sheriff Merry stated that privatization would mean that not only would the county lose control over corrections, but any funding collected as taxes would be lost to the state as well. Commissioner Crosby added that privatization would be a bad deal for the

county. Sheriff Merry agreed, and stated that a well-managed jail, operated at the local level, would be the best case scenario for the county. In response to Commissioner Dawson's comments about increased jail population, Sheriff Merry stated that they are finding more creative ways to keep low level offenders out of jail, citing community service and jail diversion programs.

Sheriff Merry continued his presentation with an update on the vehicle bidding process for a new AWD SUV for Lieutenant Stewart. The winning bidder was Bodwell Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram with a 2015 Dodge Durango. After a discussion on maintenance costs and gas mileage, the Commissioners agreed that the proposal to purchase the new vehicle was acceptable.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and a second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board authorized the Sheriff to accept the bid from Bodwell and purchase the new Dodge Durango SUV, using available transport funds.**

Sheriff Merry concluded his presentation by reporting that the county was able to secure ten (new or like-new) radar detectors. As a result of partnerships with the state and other police departments, the county obtained ten radar units for the price of one. The Commissioners commended the Sheriff and his staff for their creativity in utilizing resources.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Decision on Health Insurance

Action was taken on this issue at a previous point in the meeting. To recap:

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board authorized County administrative staff to proceed with the proposed self-funding plan and select a date for implementation.**

2. Approve Vehicle Bid

Action was taken on this issue at a previous point in the meeting. To recap:

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board authorized County to approve the lowest bid.**

3. Adoption of Revised Emergency Response Plan

The Emergency Response Plan, prepared by the Safety Committee, discusses appropriate responses and protocols for emergencies at county facilities. Administrator Hile, joined by the entire Board, commended staff on their work to update the Emergency Response Plan.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board approved the adoption of the updated County Emergency Response Plan.**

4. Upcoming Union Negotiations

The request of the Board was to appoint a Commissioner to join Administrator Hile, Communications Director Brodie Hinckley and Attorney Rick Hornbeck in the collective bargaining process with the Sagadahoc County Communications Association contract negotiation.

The Board unanimously selected Vice Chair Grose to represent the Board at the Communications Association union negotiations.

5. Presentation of Proposed FY 2015-2016 Budget

Administrator Hile began her presentation by stating that county departments budgeted very tight this year, with little room for movement or cutting fund requests. She stated that the county reserves are lower because the budgeting is getting more precise and that departments are not finishing budget years with surpluses like they did in the past.

Administrator Hile stated that every attempt was made to keep the budget as close to last year's level as possible; however, several unavoidable factors resulted in a very modest overall increase. The combined budgets for FY 2015-16 equal \$8,937,776, which is a slight increase of \$69,713 (**0.8%**) when compared to the current fiscal year combined budgets of \$8,868,063, while the amount to be raised through taxes has increased by \$137,666 (**1.7%**), from \$8,063,859 in FY 2014-15 to \$8,201,525 in FY 2015-16. Savings realized from the TBRJ bond refinancing (\$59,488) was more than offset by an increase in employee benefits (\$72,535) and a decrease in the amount available from unassigned reserves and revenues to offset the tax levy (\$67,953).

A joint meeting of the Board and the Budget Advisory Committee will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Friday, March 13, 2015 to review departmental requests. The Board will then hold a special meeting at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 17th to make any changes.

Commissioner Dawson inquired about the fringe benefit increases. Administrator Hile provided a breakdown of costs. Chair Crosby stated that the proposed budget was a result of good work by the administration to control costs, and was a realistic approach. Vice Chair Grose stated that she will approach the budget meetings with the thought that this is taxpayer money, and that perhaps the county will not be able to have as good a benefit package as it has in the past. Chair Crosby stated that it was extraordinary that the increase of the budget from last year was so low and that self-funding of health insurance will provide savings. He added that a robust health and wellness program, including the membership option at the YMCA and possible smoking cessation efforts, will help the county keep control of health insurance premiums.

Administrator Hile stated that an additional amount has been set aside in contingency funds in advance of Communications Association contract negotiations.

6. County Administrator's Report

The County Administrator's Report is attached.

COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

March 10, 2015

Chair Crosby stated that he will report on efforts surrounding workforce investment after his trip to Washington, DC that will focus on the issue. He also stated that the process has begun for MCOG to become the economic development district of record after the vote to transfer the EDA district designation from MCEDD.

Commissioner Dawson expressed concern over the unfilled Register of Probate position. Since it is the Governor's responsibility to fill the vacancy, Commissioner Dawson suggested a letter to the Governor that expresses the Board of Commissioners' desire for the position to be filled as soon as possible. The Board agreed and instructed Administrator Hile to draft a letter.

Commissioner Dawson also recounted a conversation with Probate Judge Vorhees regarding a possible salary increase for the position.

The Commissioners stated that they are willing to schedule meetings to visit localities across the county over the next number of months to explain what the Commissioners do and answer any questions the community may have.

EXECUTIVE SESSION(S)

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Dawson and second by Vice Chair Grose, **the Board voted unanimously to enter into an executive session at 4:50 p.m. pursuant to Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6., A. of the M.R.S.A. for the purpose of discussing personnel matters.**

The Commissioners left executive session at 6:15 p.m.

Upon **MOTION** by Commissioner Grose and second by Commissioner Dawson, **the Board voted by unanimous acclamation to adjourn at 6:16 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jason J. Shedlock
Deputy Director, Emergency Management Agency

March 10, 2015