

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes January 26, 2021 2320
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci 16°
Commissioners Laura Sanborn & Andre Cushing via Zoom

Roll Call -

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. from the Commissioners Chambers and Commissioners Sanborn and Cushing attending via Zoom.

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to approve November 17, November 24, December 15, December 22, December 29, 2020 and January 5 and January 12, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Probate Update –

Register Renee Stupak reported the following:

- With an increase in guardianship proceedings and estates, the Probate office is fully functioning. Court proceedings are heard primarily by Zoom.
- Maines new confidentiality law directs courts to seal all Family Matters from public view, unless so ordered by the court. Though necessary to uphold confidentiality, it has caused some technical issues for registered parties, mostly our legal community. ICON is currently working to make sure those registered, are able to view their files on-line.
- The first regular legislative session 2021, there are several Legislative requests that could impact probate courts in the coming year.

Deeds Update –

- Register Susan Bulay discussed restoration of plan books. This was a project was started a few years ago in which the surcharge account funds these restorations. The books are being done in order and we are up to: Book 3 costing \$11K; Book 4 costing \$7K and Book 5 costing \$50K. Register Bulay is requesting additional funds this year to spend from \$50,000 to \$67,500 in order to accommodate all three volumes. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$67,500 of funds from the surcharge account for restoration of three books. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Register Bulay reported that \$1.6M was turned over to the general fund in 2020.

Public Comment -

None

Sheriff's Update –

Sheriff Troy Morton reported on the following:

- Law Enforcement -
 - Requesting to go out to bid for eight (8) patrol vehicles; which have been budgeted. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve going out to bid for eight (8) patrol vehicles. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
 - Chief Deputy Bill Birch has stepped down from this position. He has accepted the position of Patrol Deputy and will be serving the Town of Eddington starting February 14th.
 - There is one more zone position that needs to be filled.
 - Forty-one law enforcement employees received their COVID vaccines through Bangor Public Health last Friday.
- Corrections –
 - In-house jail population is 161; 14 boarded out to other facilities and 193 inmates in Pre-trial Services.
 - With the large population in Pre-trial services, Sheriff would like to work on a resolution of space. It is imperative that we keep Maine Pre-Trial working in our facility as they utilize our staff for testing. Working off-site, delays in processing would occur. Pre-trial comes in every morning and screens the new arrestees to see if they qualify for Pre-Trial Services.
 - COVID vaccines for the Corrections Officers should be coming up late this week, early next. Vaccines are distributed from the DOC; MEDPRO has been certified to administer them for us.
 - Sheriff's Office continues planning with DOC and CDC and staying on top of the new recommendations requested from the CDC.
 - MEDPRO's December numbers were 55 for COVID testing; not including those that were tested when being transferred out. Thus far in January, we're at 55.
 - Board of Visitors will be held this Thursday night. We have had two board members resigned; Boyd Kronholm has agreed to fill one of the spots vacated.
 - Sheriff received from DOC 14 amended standards. Sheriff called DOC to request a meeting on these standards for a better understanding, which was declined. Instead the DOC requested Sheriff to place his questions in writing.
 - The jail kitchen convection oven is broken and cannot be repaired. Sheriff will present a quote when it comes in.
 - Sheriff hopes you consider the Control Room RFP that Facilities Director MacDonald will speak to you on during his update.

Sheriff's Update – Continued:

- Sheriff has worked vigorously with the DA's Office and Court for video conferencing to eliminate transporting inmates back and forth to court. We are now running full stream. However, we lack the space we need for this to run smoothly. We are looking to redesign a space to use as a multipurpose room for video conferencing and programming.
- Sheriff's Office has been conducting orientations.
- The Sheriff's office has been inundated with information requests from legislators, media and citizens requesting data. Sheriff doesn't have enough manpower to keep up with all the requests.

Maintenance Update –

Director Brian MacDonald presented the following:

- Commissioners are requesting that Erika look over the Control Room RFP before going out to bid.
- Director MacDonald discussed with Lt Keith Hotaling the vision on the Video Conferencing Room Project. Director MacDonald is meeting with one contractor who responded this afternoon and reach out to a couple vendors for more for quotes to make sure quotes are fair.
- Director MacDonald provided a couple prices for the jail front entrance steps.
 - Completely repair the concrete is approximately \$6,200
 - Temporary repair – cover the current concrete with aluminum stair treads with diamond, non-slip finish in the amount of approximately \$1,250. This temporary repair would last approximately 5-10 years.
 - Commissioner Cushing moved to approve repairing the jail front entrance steps with aluminum stair treads in the amount of approximately \$1,250. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Director MacDonald is still waiting on the code enforcement officer and architect to look over the old Y Building to see if any part of the building is salvageable and can be used for offices/programming.
- Director MacDonald reported on finding lights for the front of the Courthouse Building. The challenges are they are 8 foot tall versus the 7 feet; and unable to match what is currently standing. The rough estimate for the fixtures is \$1500 each; installation will be an additional cost.
- Director MacDonald communicated with our vendor on the heating pump. He agreed to modify the agreement to meet the "not to exceed" price by limiting the work for the

Maintenance Update – Continued:

welder and fitter. After discussion it was agreed to go back to the original quote. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve for the vendor to proceed installation of the heating pump at the regular quote. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

- City of Bangor will be installing the LED light in the lower parking lot today.

UT Update –

- Director Weeks presented for signature the Animal Control agreements:
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the contract for Eddington as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Tax Abatement Appeal Hearing – Kolman

- Present via ZOOM were:
 - Ted Kolman, Spokesman for Property Owner
 - Lisa Whynot, Supervisor of the Unorganized Territories, State of Maine
 - Justin McMann, Property Appraiser and Field Rep for the State of Maine
- The properties are located at: Map PE017 Plan 02 Lot 2.2 and Map PE 017 Plan 02 Lot 3.23; T5R7 WELS Penobscot
- These properties are part of the Rogers Camp Community which was founded in 1820. These properties are generational and cannot be sold to outsiders as part of the covenant. Our properties were purchased for \$1 from Laurie Rogers in the mid 1960's.
- These properties are on the south end of Shin Pond and can only be accessed by boat. There are eight other camps in this area and all are summer camps as they are not winterized. There are no utilities. Everything has to be brought in from a boat. We utilize no state amenities i.e., fire protection, trash pickup, schools, and roads.
- The log cabin on one of the properties was built in 1971; the sleeping cabin on the other property was built in 2015 and are used 3-4 weeks a year.
- Our taxes were increased from 2019 to 2020 57% on one property and 47% on the other property. The State lowered the costs on both properties from 57% to 26% on one and 47% to 27%. Mr. Kolman feels that the State is using Shin Ponds north end as the comparison.

Tax Abatement Appeal Hearing – Kolman – Continued:

- Justin McMann, Property Appraiser for the State of Maine explained the methodology used in assessing the taxes.
 - Exhibit 1 (2019 Tax Bill) and Exhibit 4 (2020 Tax Bill) on the first property. The difference between the two years is the land value went down, and the building values went up since it had been a number of years since they had been appraised. Mr. Kolman's building value went up roughly 25%. With this increase, the Kolman taxes went up approximately \$90.
 - Exhibit 2 (2019 UT Property record card) and Exhibit 5 (2020 UT Property record card) on the first property. Mr. McMann did not speak on the Land Valuation since that did not seem to be an issue and spoke on the property itself which included construction details. In 2019 there was a routine inspection in the entire township. Part of the inspection was verifying the measurements, constructions, and general look of the buildings. The valuations are at the discretion of the field rep; the significant adjustment in the building valuation was the development of the new building.
 - Exhibit 6 (2019 Tax Bill) and Exhibit 9 (2020 Tax Bill) on the second property. Again, the difference between the two years is the land value went down, and the building values went up since it had been a number of years since they had been appraised. It was the replacement cost that increased the property value. Mr. Kolman's building value went up roughly 25%.
 - Exhibit 7 (2019 UT Property record card) and Exhibit 10 (2020 UT Property record card) on the second property. These show the values before and after in inspection that took place in 2019. The State gives a 10% reduction to all property owners who have non-traditional access to their property. That is for people that can only access their property via boat. (No access via road or islands)
 - Exhibit 13 are comparable neighboring properties provided by the Petitioner. Those also show the increase in property and decrease in land.
 - Exhibit 12 are the recent sales on Shin Pond; we don't take in consideration that the sales are prohibited in the area Mr. Kolman's properties are at.
- Mr. Kolman feels that the comparisons are not really comparisons. Where our properties are, we have no use of public amenities. Mr. Kolman feels that it isn't right to use market value on these properties; they are not easily assessable.
- The Commissioners stated that they would make a decision and get back to all parties.
- Hearing concluded at 10:40 a.m.

Finance Update –

Finance Director Judy Alexander reported the following:

- Director Alexander stated that \$179,101 for jail funding from the State has been received.
- The 10-year \$6M PRCC Infrastructure bond discussion continued with Director Alexander stating she had spoken to Attorney Bearor. After further discussion regarding the bond bids, the following action was taken.
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve First National Bank 1.95% interest rate on the proposed terms of making monthly payments on funds drawn down. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Director Lavoie believes that there will be \$4M drawn down between from now until the fall. Director Alexander will review every draw down.
- Director Alexander states that she will present at next week's Commissioners meeting the following:
 - Carry forward requests in the amount of \$213K (spreadsheet also showing historical data over the last five years)
 - Commissioner Baldacci would like to know how we stand with our surplus with our budget
 - Commissioner Baldacci would like to see what we have in escrows
- MainePERS has selected Penobscot County to review our records from October to December 2020.
- Secretary of State's Office assessments have been done and the tax warrants will be provided next week.
- W4's and 1099's will be going out next week by January 28th
- Director Alexander conveyed our history with Machias Savings Bank goes back until November 2011. In 2016 and 2017 we were receiving .6%; 2018 we were receiving .7% until April 2018 when it was increased to 1.75%

Administration Update –

Administrator Erika Honey reported on the following:

- We received three letters from Safety Works indicating they've closed out our requested voluntary review of the Campus for safety hazards.
- The Wellness Committee has placed two pieces of equipment out for bid; the bid opening will take place at the February 16th meeting.

Administration Update – Continued:

- We solicited approximately 50 employees and elected officials that are not part of the first responder's tiers to see if they are interested in receiving the vaccine in case there is additional vaccines available. We have approximately 25 interested.
- The three additional security cameras installations should be completed today.
- Two Victim Witness Advocates are moving into Bill's old office today.
- Employment within the County:
 - Two internal positions closed Friday; two for DA Clerical Specialist II and one Senior Operator for PRCC.
 - An external corrections utility custodian position closed Friday.
 - We have posted an internal position for Deeds Clerical Specialist I that will close next Friday
- I will participate in the PRCS Board Meeting tomorrow
- I will be meeting with AFSCME C/O Supervisors Thursday for contract negotiations.
- There were discussions last week with FOP
- HR, Facilities and myself participated in volunteer training with the jail's program Corporal.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: William Birch, Daniel Valcourt, Brittany Russell, and Milynda Johnston – Payroll Status Change
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 01.22.2021: \$249,976.04
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 01.26.2021: \$50,757.71
- UT Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- UT TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:00 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Administrator Honey, Director Alexander, Sheriff Morton and Treasurer Hiatt. Session ended at 11:39 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:40 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Administrator Honey, Director Alexander, and Treasurer Hiatt. Session ended at 11:50 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Cushing moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:51 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Certified By:

Administrator, Erika Honey

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner