

**Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes April 6, 2021**

**2329**

**9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci & Laura Sanborn  
Commissioner Andre Cushing via Zoom**

**43°**

**Roll Call -**

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:05 a.m. from the Commissioners Chambers with Commissioner Sanborn and Commissioner Cushing attending via Zoom.

**Public Comment -**

***Janet Drew – citizen from York, Maine***

Participant states that she is concerned after last week's meeting it is believed that the same questions are being asked weekly from reports their group is receiving from the jail. The goal is to provide a support system in the community. Our group comes here as it's the only one place to go to try to address the punitive culture. This punitive culture has been built up for decades, and we're now trying to change it. The problem is everywhere, we need to find where the problems are and work together, because we all have a role to play to reduce incarceration.

Participant thanks Commissioner Sanborn for speaking last week about the financial decisions and that some part of the budgets that are going to be made to include support. Communities need support to help vulnerable people, not just jail beds. We can be creative, work in partnerships together to get help for everybody to succeed.

The required corrections officer trainings can't replace professionals that are needed to address the complex needs of people that are in prison. There was discussion about current legislation requiring people to have some social work training working in dispatch. That may be good since it would change the culture; it sounds like a good concept.

***Martin Chartrand – resident of Bangor***

Participant spoke of suggestions that may be helpful for issues in the jail. He stated: there has been an increase of relapses and overdose deaths in the past year since the COVID pandemic started. It's well documented in some of the research that isolation and issues of mental health and depression that comes with the lack of in-person recovery services and meetings. Economic desperation and drug supply itself being disrupted, meaning there are more deadly drugs or strains like fentanyl that are out there. People aren't necessarily sure what they're getting in to which increases the dangers. This is the one big issue relating to people getting released from jail not ending up dead or back in jail, having adequate harm reduction services.

**Public Comment – Continued:**

Participant is encouraging the County to look into using some of the pandemic assistance money to address some of these needs that are directly COVID in preventing overdose deaths and offering greater access to treatment for substance use.

Participant brought up that there is a suboxone treatment with the MAT program in the jail, but not methadone. That's a big hole we're hearing. Perhaps some of those funds can be used for that too.

***Zeraph Moore –***

Participant focused more on what we can do better in the community. Maine experienced its worst overdose history last year with 502 deaths. Penobscot County, unfortunately often leads the state in terms of overdose deaths per our population percentage. Participant request that the commissioners reach out and see what the needs are among service providers who offer services to opioid harm reduction. Along with that is the mental health issues. Organizations know what their needs are, deficits they have experienced during COVID that they may need help with. Perhaps some of the pandemic assistance can be used because it is a direct result of COVID.

Participant echo's Participant statement that a methadone program in PCJ or having the jail become a licensed provider is something fairly new to look at. There are models to look at and how to do it safely.

**Photocopier Bid Opening –**

Commissioner Baldacci was presented with seven (7) photocopier bids to replace eight (8) copiers submitted by the April 5<sup>th</sup> deadline.

A-Copi Kinney	\$22,334
Ricoh	\$37,880
Budget Document Technology	\$27,326
Levesque Business Solutions	\$37,180
Levesque Business Solutions	\$39,329
Kyocera Office	\$37,978
Transco	\$33,685

Commissioner Sanborn moved to take these bids under advisement. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Administration Update –

Administrator Erika Honey reported on the following:

- Administrator Honey forwarded to Commissioner's information on a NACo call with the White House that is taking place this afternoon at one. Unfortunately, Administrator Honey won't be available at that time, but will go back and view. County Administrators are having conversations and keeping each other abreast of any progress or any new information.
- Administrator Honey has been in discussion about changing our county website. The Deeds website, is managed through a separate group, as it's on an IBM platform. Although that platform was down last week for a couple days, it should be resolved today. I'll be checking in with Register Bulay on that progress.
- Director Alexander and Administrator Honey will be meeting with our banking partners to discuss deposit rates in anticipation of any substantial funds we may be receiving. We will be working on collecting that information for you and presenting rates and terms. During this review, we are going to take the opportunity to discuss our county credit card options as you may want to consider different management options.
- Administrator Honey will be participating in the Incident Command System training for elected and senior officials Friday. This will be provided by our own EMA Director Bradley Nuding.
- Employment within the County:
  - Assistant Finance Director interviews were conducted and we're moving through the hiring process
  - IT Systems Administrator position is being reposted for an additional two weeks as we had a fairly small candidate pool.
  - We are reposting the part-time DA Clerical Assistant position. The DA's office had shifted its focus on bringing on a new Victim Witness Coordinator. The new Victim Witness Coordinator has been selected and will be starting this coming Monday.
- The COVID Emergency time that was extended to our employees has expired as of March 31. Employees will now to use their sick or vacation time for any COVID related issues. Notifications as to what that looks like will be sent out to all our staff at the end of this week.
- Commissioner Baldacci reported on the legislative conference call for MCCA. Some of the bills talked about was eliminating the fire protocols from the dispatch centers as not being effective and slowing down response time. Our dispatch center is in favor of changing those protocols to allow for a faster response.

**Administration Update – Continued:**

- Commissioner Baldacci also reported that it was approved for MCCA to send a letter to our congressional delegation to support and hopefully co-sponsor legislation to get rid of the inmate exclusion from Medicaid Act. Currently inmates who are in a pre-trial status are excluded from maintaining coverage for Medicaid, and/or Medicare. If they're in a jail, prior to any conviction. There is a bill that died in the last Congress, because the senate never took it up for a vote, that is going to be re-brought forward. We're urging our congressional delegation by letter to support that, and to possibly agree to co-sponsor. 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: Alan Hammond and Lisa E. Dwinal – hired Full-time; Michael Morin, Samuel McCarty and Nicole Matthew – Payroll status changes.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 04.02.2021: \$253,720.04
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 04.06.2021: \$420,780.07
- PRCC Bond to be approved for 04.06.2021: \$5,531.25
- UT Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- UT TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

**Sheriff's Update –**

Sheriff Troy Morton reported the following on Corrections:

- In-house jail population is 140; 40 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, county swaps and there **180** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- Intake is back fully functioning as a regional booking process. We had tried maintaining a five a day general rule; however, it was placing a tremendous burden on local law enforcement due to some very high-profile violent arrests that were being made. We went beyond those numbers to take those individuals in.
- CDC and MDOC provided good reports on our handling of the recent outbreak.
- Several of the jails that took in our inmates during the outbreak are now requesting that we bring them back to Penobscot County.
- With the courts reopening, we are experiencing some challenges. Those who leave the facility, have to be quarantine upon each return. We are trying to advise the court of the benefit of using video arraignments to mitigate this problem.
- We are still trying to deal with some inmates that are refusing to wear masks.
- We're working with a local medical provider on vaccines for the inmate population; the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be used as it is a one-shot vaccination.

**Sheriff's Update – Continued:**

- We're working with a local medical provider on vaccines for the inmate population; the Johnson & Johnson vaccine will be used as it is a one-shot vaccination.
- We're pulling together a plan to work with outside vendors to come this Thursday or Friday for a second round of vaccinations.
- The construction crew is on site today working on the jail project. They are making great progress and Brian is doing a great job of helping coordinate the contractors.

Sheriff Troy Morton reported the following on the Law Enforcement Division:

- Law Enforcement is extremely busy with increased calls of speeding and distracted driving.
- Sheriff is requesting to hire an additional deputy as he has two retirements coming up this summer and one deputy on extended military service. Commissioner Cushing moved to approve this request. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- PCHC received a grant to provide a clinician to respond with a deputy outside the facility after hours.
- Sheriff's Office assisted Brewer Police Department in a standoff. We have tremendous crisis negotiating resources that other departments utilize.
- Sheriff received communication from a grandmother whose grandson suffers from mental health issues. Her letter outlines the trials she has endured with no help available for her grandson. Her letter proves that we need to address mental health issues before anything else.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9:55 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, Sheriff Morton, DA Marianne Lynch, Director Alexander, Treasurer Hiatt and Administrator Honey. Session ended at 10:05 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:10 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, Sheriff Morton, Director Alexander, Treasurer Hiatt and Administrator Honey. Session ended at 10:20 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:25 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 and Administrator Honey. Session ended at 10:35 a.m.

**Meeting Adjourned-**

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Certified By:**

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Administrator, Erika Honey

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Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

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Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

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Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner