

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes April 20, 2021 2331
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing & Laura Sanborn 53°

Roll Call -

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. from the Commissioners Chambers with all three commissioners present in person.

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve March 2, March 9, March 16, March 23 and April 13, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment -

Susan D'Alessandro –concerned citizen from Millinocket

Participant reported that recently a 15-year-old found his parents on the floor who died of an overdose. It is a known fact that overdoses are dramatically increasing each year. Which is why Participant is focusing today's comments on prevention and is hopeful that the Commissioners utilize some of the funds coming in to source those measures.

In April, Maine DOE conducted a workshop "Supporting Maine Educators: A Forum to Bolster Mental Health in our Schools". The first keynote speaker was John Broderick, a retired New Hampshire Supreme Court Chief Justice speaking on how mental health and subsequent addiction with his own son. Some of his highlights were that 50% of mental illness occurs by the age of 14. Students participated in the same webinar who stressed the problems that kids today are dealing with need to be dealt with much earlier.

At a local meeting, Millinocket Superintendent of Schools reported that 80% of the school system students are in need of mental health services. Testimony by Augusta Chief of Police, Jared Mills submitted testimony of continued support for critical early care and education programs. The government's most fundamental responsibility is to protect the public safety. Chief Mills states that lives can be saved if we invest in programs that can keep children from growing up to be criminals in the first place.

Sheriff Morton, DA Lynch and the Commissioners have all said that lack of funding for community services is lacking contributing to incarcerations. DOC Commissioner Liberty has said that if we want to decrease county operating costs, let's work together on identifying prevention efforts to decrease the number of people going into the county jail system; preventing future incarceration will result in lasting cost savings. Let us focus on enhancing systems designed to strengthen youth and families. Let us think more broadly about how we all

Public Comment – Continued:

can help kids grow into their potential, and grow healthy.

Let's dedicate monies where it's needed most and will give the most return on the investment.

Dylan Moore – Concerned Citizen

Participant stated he was here to follow up on an email he sent to the Commissioners.

Participant discussed the need for a proactive methadone program at PCJ. Sheriff Morton responded that it was not part of the statewide model policy with exception for its use in pregnant women. Participant has heard from multiple people that when they enter jail, they are being forced to go off methadone; going through unmedicated detox and being extremely sick. Participant states he filed a Freedom of Information Access request with PCJ for all medication assisted treatment policies; along with the number of individuals who were treated in 2020.

Participant is hopeful that use of COVID relief funds will be used to address pandemic related issues that affect people with substance use disorders.

Commissioner Baldacci responded to Participant stating the he spoke to the head nurse in the jail. The county has not been using methadone, but suboxone. Years ago, we were one of the only jails in the state that did use methadone, but the methadone clinics in the area were refusing to provide the methadone unless the jail transported each inmate to the clinic every day for the dosage. That was unreasonable and burdensome. Commissioner Baldacci reported that they are working on reestablishing methadone availability at the jail. Discover House is working on a program that methadone will be provided to maintain people in the jail; there is no definitive date.

Janet Drew – citizen from York

Participant stated that York County Jail recently hired a teacher as a correctional officer. Monies should go to school programs instead of jails. Although jail corrections are a secure job, people don't like doing it as it is not a rewarding job.

Participant is hopeful that some of the COVID relief funds will be set aside for prevention. COVID has hit every home, every school, every business, the whole economy has been hit one way or another. Participant spoke last week about Millinocket with the children having no resources or options; she spoke about a family member. It was heartbreaking

Public Comment – Continued:

Participant then referred to comments from last week. About how everybody that is in PCJ is bad and they deserve to be there. It is that type of attitude where everybody's bad and getting what they deserve that needs to be changed. The people that are incarcerated are poor and they're sick. They make bad choices. If they had money, they could go to places for treatment.

Commissioner Baldacci responded by saying that he didn't feel that a teacher who wishes to be a corrections officer is a bad thing. Part of what we have to do with the culture is to have people working in the jail who see it as a mission to help correct people's behaviors.

Commissioner Baldacci stated that the speaker last week was the opinion of one individual and it does not represent everyone. The culture is changed when the people come in with a mission to change the culture. I think that's a positive thing.

Larry Dansinger – citizen of Bangor

Participant reiterated the purpose and goals of our group "No Penobscot County Jail Expansion"; That is to reduce the number of people in the jail because we do not believe that the jail in present functioning is working well for our communities. Participant feels that the jail is working on punishment and not rehabilitation.

A letter had been forwarded from an inmate named Daniel. Daniel is an example of why someone should not be in jail. If the descriptions of what has happened to Daniel are accurate, that is the kind of horrendous treatment that should not be existing in any jail at any time. I'm hoping that the Commissioners will investigate what's going on with Daniel; as well as concerns that were brought up in early March. If possible, someone from the Board of Visitors might be willing to be a neutral third party who's not invested with the individuals in the jails. If someone from the Board of Visitors is not willing to do that, then the commissioners search out someone to make sure that investigation is done. These can not be ignored.

Participant echo's that some of the additional funding through the rescue act would be an opportunity to address issues such as mental health and substance use disorders.

Commissioner Baldacci responded that he spoke with the nurse in charge of the medical division yesterday regarding Daniel. She was limited by full HIPAA regulations, but did respond to some of our concerns. She indicated that they are providing treatment as needed; and she checks on him every day and providing medication when needed. The nurse strongly refuted things that were said.

PRCC Update –

Director Chris Lavoie reported the following:

- Last week was National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.
- Last Wednesday we travelled for the 2020 Maine NENA (National Emergency Number Association) Conference. The following team members were awarded or nominated for awards:
 - Silent Hero Award – Dispatcher/Call-taker that exhibits exceptional professionalism and who is an inspiration to others. Liz Ryan was nominated and received this award. Liz has been an employee of the Center for 24 years, and strives for excellence each and every day. Liz goes above and beyond to take care of her staff not only during work but outside work as well. Congratulations Supervisor Ryan!
 - Shift Supervisor of the Year Nomination – Recognition of Supervisor of their outstanding service and for exceptional professionalism in the field of emergency communications that is demonstrated on a daily basis. Nominee- Tracey Erikson
 - Stork Awards – Dispatchers/Call-takers that delivers a baby prior to Ambulance Arrival in 2020: Sara Rogers and JaShelle Colson
 - Critical Incident of the Year Award Nominations: The following employees Michaelle Day, Time Hall, Will Lovejoy, Elizabeth Ryan, Betty Stone, Josh Lilley, Brad Fitzgerald, Brittany Russell, Blake Miller, Mike Surdick, Toni Davis, Jon Chiasson, JaShelle Colson, Jacob Hammond, Ryan Auffant, McKenzie Madden, Sara Rogers and Rebecca Ireland were nominated for their role in the April 10, 2020 spring storm that completely took most of the communications towers offline. The back up dispatch center was activated and staff members went above and beyond to handle the increase call volume. In just 16 hours, the center logged 1,933 calls for service.
- Director Lavoie spoke to Rep. Perry in reference to LD 1314 which is an act to require 9-1-1 centers to hire and retain social workers 24-7. Director Lavoie did not agree with the bill as it had been written and has since been withdrawn.
- The bill LD 1306 is being watched more carefully. This bill is more about public safety intervention. The number that will be used is 988 which will be used for social workers.
- The tower climbers were here last week and cleaned up the antenna's, etc.
- A challenge is we're still uncovering multiple problems as we are cleaning up areas. We are still working out bugs in the systems. We're uncovering areas in the infrastructure that were not taken care of previously.

EMA Update –

Director Bradley Nuding presented four quotes for a capital equipment purchase. EMA is looking to trade in a mass casualty incident trailer and downsize to a 2021 7x12 aluminum enclosed trailer. The monies will be used from an expiring grant.

- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve purchase of a 7x12 aluminum trailer from Harvey Trailers in the amount of \$5347.50 with trade in and doc fees. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

TAN Award –

Director Alexander recommends awarding Machias Savings Bank the \$5.2M for the Tax Anticipation Note. Machias Savings bank interest is at .89% as needed or on a lump sum basis. Commissioner Cushing moved to approve awarding Machias Savings Bank as presented. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0. Commissioner Cushing amended the motion to include the resolution drafted by Eaton and Peabody to authorize the sale of up to \$5.2M was approved. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Director Alexander introduced the new Assistant Director of Finance, Andrea Foster. Commissioners welcomed Andrea to the County.

DA Update -

District Attorney Marianne Lynch presented the following:

- DA Lynch introduced Alan Hammond as the new Victim Witness Coordinator (VWC). Mr. Hammond comes to us with 43 years of military experience and has worked with the Maine Criminal Justice Academy.
- VWC Amy McCrea is still being housed at the Bangor Police Department. Amy's position is continuing to pay off with her experience and training. Amy is an asset to have available when needed and to provide guidance to the newer officers.
- Other new staff members are welcomed to the District Attorney's office are: ADA Katie Campbell, Attorney Joanne Lewis and Intern Lori Renzullo.
- We are returning to our diversion program once a month for low end offenses. (i.e. shoplifting, possession, criminal mischief) DA Lynch will be talking to Partners for Peace to see how to expand this to Piscataquis County.

Administration Update –

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- A message was left on our County Website following last week's public comment.
- In recapping a couple FOAA requests:
 - Communication between our EMA director, Governor and Senior Aides from March 17, 2020 and April 13, 2021. There was none; this has been closed.
 - Sheriff's Office and Board of Visitors regarding the MAT program.
- Employment within the County:
 - A number of positions have closed this week; interviews will follow
 - A new Clerical Specialist I position has opened up in the Probate Office.
- Last week's meeting included:
 - Administrator Honey attended a partial MCCA meeting last Wednesday.
 - Communication went out regarding PREA Board requirements in your folders; these have been satisfied.
 - We are currently reviewing deposit rates.
 - Administrator Honey attended the MCCAM meeting last Thursday with the main topic of conversation being clarification from the treasury.
 - AFLAC representative was here last week. We are requesting that we have an open enrollment for our employees.
- Coming up meetings this week include:
 - There will be FOP Line Negotiation this Thursday and Friday.
 - There will be a 457B review with VOYA on Wednesday.
- As reported in the media, we have been considered outbreak status in the Penobscot County Jail. An outbreak status is when you have three or more positive cases. Currently we have four cases with inmates. Universal testing has been conducted with all negative results coming back from the first universal testing. We will have follow up in 14 days.
- Administrator Honey recommends that the jail visit for May 4th be rescheduled until a later date when the outbreak status has been lifted.
- Administrator Honey requests that we re-sign with docu-sign and the monies come out of the Administration budget.
- Sheriff Morton is in meetings this morning, but provided the following: In-house jail population is 173; 31 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, county swaps and there **184** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- Commissioner Cushing moved to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Administration Update – Continued:

- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Lori Renzullo – Hired Part Time; Catherine Bazinet – Hired Full Time.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 04.16.26.2021: \$247,874.25
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 04.15.2021: \$87,276.07
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 04.20.2021: \$292,557.94
- 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 10:16 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, 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 10:22 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, Director Alexander, Treasurer Hiatt and Administrator Honey. Session ended at 10:29 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Cushing made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:30 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matter. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners and Administrator Honey. Session ended at 10:45 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Baldacci moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:46 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Certified By:

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner

Administrator, Erika Honey