

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes May 11, 2021 2334
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing & Laura Sanborn 52°

Roll Call -

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

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve April 6, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment -

Janet Drew – resident of York

Participant is requesting that with the COVID funds coming in, the Commissioners will focus on ways to partner with community groups. Participant feels there is a need to find a way to change culture in the jail. Participant hears that the jails are having trouble staffing correction officers; it is a hard and thankless job. So, if we could move to mentors and community partners, maybe people would want to work those jobs that are more satisfying to see people succeed.

There are continuing concerns about not all staff members of the jail being vaccinated. It is not fair to the communities, hospitals or inmates. Something should be done about that.

Susan D'Alessandro –concerned citizen from Millinocket

Participant reports that her primary concern is prevention primarily for kids; what we can do for our kids to avoid them falling into the trap that is filling the jails. There is a lack of community-based services for mental health and substance use, both in the community and in the prison and jail system. With the COVID funds coming in, you could talk about what your plans are as the County Commission's for those resources. Participant urges that the focus be made on investments and long-lasting solutions that get out for root causes, instead of putting out brush fires constantly.

Commissioner Baldacci responded saying that just today, we received some information on guidelines. There'll be more to provide once we've had a chance to digest.

Commissioner Cushing responded saying that we need to clarify that some of the public comments are certainly their opinions. When participants characterize our corrections officers

Public Comment – Continued:

as having certain attitudes, I take umbrage with that. Commissioner Cushing feels that it is time that those types of statements be addressed. Those folks that are working in the jail make quite a dedicated effort. They come in to work and deal with some very tough situations. Many of these officers are very compassionate individuals who take the time to work with these inmates. They find solutions for them where they can within the confines of what they have. I find it highly disappointing that someone who spends most of their time in Southern Maine and has never met our corrections officers, characterizes them through some reading that may have been done of a publication of someone who's never met these officers. Personally, not as a position of a Commissioner, that I take offense of speaking of our officers in the manner spoken.

EMDC Update –

EMDC President and CEO Lee Umphrey reported the following on the new Katahdin Region economic development director:

- Peter Jamieson was named the new economic development director.
- Peter has been director of the Katahdin Chamber of Commerce will work on programs and development in the eight towns that make up the EMDC's Katahdin Region.
- Peter is from the area and his experience supporting businesses makes him the right person for this position. Everybody knows him and we're really pleased to have him come on board.
- On his first day, Peter spent yesterday here at EMDC getting everything he needs.
- In a few weeks, if you are interested, we can provide an update on his first month.
- Mr. Umphrey feels that having somebody embedded in the community up there, with all the tools that we can provide as a regional organization has made that successful. A lot of good things have happened in two years; our expectation is Mr. Jamieson is going to build on that.
- Special thanks to Commissioner Laura Sanborn for serving on the EMDC board; and thank you to all county commissioners for investing in this project.

Other updates Mr. Umphrey reported on are:

- A comprehensive planning process for the four counties is going on at this time. This is an important exercise because not only is it an economic development strategy, but it's a document that will go to the feds and foundations and other people to demonstrate

EMDC Update – continued:

who we are as a region. We've attended three meetings so far, with the last meeting including Senator King as the keynote speaker. Mr. Umphrey big focus is letting folks in DC know that there is more to Maine than Augusta south which is always a challenge.

- Mr. Umphrey stated that the Katahdin region comprehensive plan with Millinocket, East Millinocket and Medway with our new planner Anna is being worked on. There is also work on an Island Falls comprehensive plan. We're doing all the work to get that designation, but we don't have it. Years ago, the Penobscot Valley Council of Governments existed, then it disbanded. So, in a way, this is a next generation of that. Because of the work we do, it already makes a lot of sense. We talked about it in the regional sits meetings and have support from the community. I want to ask that the County Commissioners also support that. This will create EMDC a program entity that makes us a planning designated organization. That will make us eligible for federal funds, state funds, and it's kind of like a stamp of approval. In looking at the criteria, it's everything we do now. The first step was to talk to people in the community and make sure that we're comfortable with it and we passed that test. Having an endorsement from the Penobscot County Commissioners as part of our proposal to go back to the state would be great.
- Commissioner Baldacci responded that we are also going down a road here that has not occurred before, which is the American Rescue Plan. We will need and want your assistance of your agency to help us when we make choices and decisions about the most effective use of some of the funds with your people's knowledge of the grant process and federal government. We would appreciate whatever assistance we can receive from Eastern Maine Development and look forward to working with you on some of the aspects of this program.
- Mr. Umphrey responded to Commissioner Baldacci that EMDC had been through this process as an organization with the Care Act money and EMDC distributed \$49M in our region. Part of that, too, was providing technical assistance to different people. I think the value we can bring to the county in this process is how to federally leverage this money to make sure it doesn't duplicate other efforts, because there's other federal monies coming down the pike, but also how to help some of these smaller towns and communities who don't have the capacity to make some decisions. This is going to be part of our regional planning; organization proposal is that we help the smaller towns and the region as a whole. County Commissioners, you've been very responsible of how to create sustainability. I think with this new money, that we get the best bang for our buck and determine what makes the most sense. One of the things that we can bring is an approach that's equal to everybody. I think this is an opportunity for all of us to make Penobscot County stronger, but we need a process that's going to be fair.

UT Update –

Director Shaw Weeks requested the following for approval:

- Solid Waste Agreement with the Town of Sherman. This is an increase in price of around \$300 (about 15%); their contracts are up for transportation disposal and facility management, so this reflects the price increase. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve this agreement as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0. Signed.

Deeds Update –

Registrar Susan Bulay reported the following:

- Deeds are continuing to do really well with our collecting funds. We're still about 20-30% of what we would expect to get for the April. Our average is \$97K and we're projected to receive approximately \$120K.
- Registrar Bulay reported that one her employees was affected by the fire last night. He is currently staying with family and is taking the rest of the week off to try to figure out what he's going to do.

Finance Update -

Director Alexander provided a report on expenditures and revenues through April 30, 2021:

- On expenditures:
 - Every department is within the spending limit except for the IT department. This is due to software that's paid for up front.
 - There is a new line "contingency"; for the next three months the county is still paying the former administrator's health insurance portion.
 - Currently, overall, we have spent only 28.55% of our budget.
- On Revenues:
 - EMA is still not where it should be; this is due to a lag of two-three months.
 - The Commissioners source of revenue comes from 10% indirect that we get from NWDB; parking passes and other smaller revenue lines.
 - UT revenue – we bill quarterly and semi-annually
 - Piscataquis County gets billed quarterly for the IT revenue
 - Gas tax reimbursement goes out every six months
 - PILT funds haven't been received yet; they usually are received in June.

Finance Update – Continued:

- There is a slight decrease in the Katahdin Project PILT balance because we had a payment to EMDC for 25%
- There is no change in the PILT Reserve
- Capital:
 - Property Acquisition expenditures on utilities that we've paid at 127 Hammond Street property.
- Director Alexander thanked Commissioner Sanborn on sharing the American Rescue Plan fact sheet that she passed on for reference. The bank account has been set up for the funds; my only concern is I would prefer not to put any funds in that account until the ICS is set up. I am working with the bank to make sure that the insurance is there before we deposit funds in that account.
- I am working with Lt. Hotaling and Administrator Honey on the jail fiscal year budget; which is due in Augusta by July 1st.

Facilities Update -

Facilities Director Brian MacDonald reported the following:

- Since last month's report, we have closed twenty work orders, with seven (7) work orders open with significant repairs. Some of these items are becoming very expensive. Fifteen of the closed work orders were plumbing related failures/issues. Four (4) of the remaining work orders are plumbing related. Several open tickets are still waiting on parts. Most of these needed parts are currently approximately 12-14 weeks. We are trying to keep an inventory on some of the parts we are purchasing to have on hand when a failure of the same occurs.
- The outside cleanup took place this past weekend. There are still a couple of issues that need to be addressed.
- I've been around the YMCA property a couple of times, and that looks a lot better. However, there is a concrete wall over behind the YMCA where above the wall is an absolute mess. Not sure where the line is, I'm not sure what is our responsibility and what is not. This is a work in progress.
- Now that the outside clean up is complete, the exterior window cleaning will be scheduled.
- In the parking lot, next to the dumpsters, the hot top has failed and appears there may be some ground work repair needed. Bangor Public Works was contacted for repair recommendations and I met with them last week. There was no leak found nearby.

Facilities Update – Continued:

Director MacDonald has reached out to a couple local earthwork contractors to include in the quote to dig and reseal this surface.

- Director MacDonald provided information for two poles and two fixtures to replace the outside poles in front of this building. Prices have more than doubled in recent months; along with approximately 12-week lead time. Commissioner Sanborn will check with someone in Argyle for a quote. Commissioner Cushing moved to approve Director MacDonald to go forward with two lights. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Provided to the Commissioners is an inspection quote from Roof Systems of Maine. There has been no preventative maintenance performed in several years. With the age of the slate roof, and other buildings roofing that is no longer covered by warranty. This type of preventative maintenance inspection is needed on a regular basis. The quote also includes some minor repairs. Commissioner Cushing moved to award Roof Systems of Maine estimated price of \$9,430 to inspect and complete minor repairs to the roofing. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Due to the PRCC radio room overheating, Director MacDonald provided a quote from Mechanical Services for a heat pump. This installation would be dedicated to the radio rooms to protect our recent investment from damage. This will be paid for by PRCC. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$14,350 for installation of a heat pump for PRCC. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- MERV 13 filters were received for all other buildings, but the jail. The jail air handlers do not recirculate air, so it was recommended that the MERV 13 would not be needed as 100% outside air did not raise the same concern regarding the virus transmission as in the recirculating air systems of the other buildings.
- Bangor Fire department was here on May 2nd touring and training inside the old courthouse building. Training will continue until all of BFD shifts have been involved.
- Safety inspections were performed on May 2nd on all but the jail fire extinguishers, emergency lights, and exit signs. Significant repair/replacement of emergency lights and exit signs are needed.

AFSCME Corrections Supervisory Contract Signing –

Present for signatures were AFSCME Union Representative Sylvia Hebert, Sgt. John Nuttall and Cpl. Gerald Carstensen.

AFSCME Corrections Supervisory Contract Signing – Continued:

Director Honey and Union Representative Hebert complimented each other stating that negotiations were successful and the ease of working together was a benefit.

Director Honey stated that the retro pay will be coming in the next few weeks.

Sheriff's Update -

Sheriff Troy Morton presented the following on the corrections side:

- As of this date, 70 inmates have been vaccinated. PCHC is continuing to provide vaccinations to our inmates; with about 50% of inmate population vaccinated.
- There was a supervisors meeting for jail personnel discussing all the challenges in the jail. One of the greatest challenges is the failure in the facility. Also noted are the high number of medical and mental health inmates that do not belong in the jail.
- Sheriff stated that there are 14 inmates identified that should not be incarcerated in the jail because of their mental health conditions. We are continuing to work with the State in order to place these individuals where they need to be.
- Sheriff has requested budget amounts for both Riverview and Doreatha Dix hospitals; and their average daily population. What Sheriff has uncovered is their budget is three times the more than our jail budget; yet they serve less than 30-40 individuals a day.

Sheriff Morton presented the following on the law enforcement side of the house:

- Detective interviews are under way to replace one that is retiring this summer.
- Patrol interviews are under way to replace a northern deputy that is retiring this summer and another position to fill in.
- Deputies are continuing multiple calls for suicides and overdoses. Deputies are tasked with administering Narcan.
- Discussion ensued on providing in-car cameras. Sheriff was unable to secure a grant to pay for these cameras. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve support for Sheriff to present an RFP for quotes for leasing dashboard web cameras. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- This week is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Week. Commissioners thank the them for their dedicated service to Penobscot County and our communities.

Administration Update –

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- Administrator Honey proposes that we conduct the jail tour on June 1st
- Formal motions were made for PENQUIS Steering Committee.
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve reappointment of Mark Leonard. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve appointing Terry Thurston Hill from Shin Pond and Jane Danforth from Millinocket. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- The NACo conference will be held July 9-12 in Maryland. Commissioner Baldacci states he will be attending with MCCA paying his way. Commissioner Cushing would like to attend feeling that speaking to other members will be valuable due to the American Rescue Funds will be coming in our way.
- Employment within the County:
 - Brandon Tenney has been selected as the new IT Systems Administrator and starts May 21st
 - Wrapping up interviews on the DA and Probate Clerical Specialist I position.
 - We would like approved the new Clerical Assistant position for the HR Office.
- Last week's meeting included:
 - We have a meeting with our VOYA representatives it looks like our 457 plan is in great shape. Fee reduction from 1.25% to 1. % We are looking to streamline our employee experience in paperwork by utilizing the portal.
 - Director Honey had a meeting with CGI communications. This is an affiliation with NACo that provides video production services that highlights different aspects of the county. I think the first matter to work on is our website; and hopeful that by the end of the year we can have a facelift on our website.
- Coming up meetings this week include:
 - We have having our MCCA meeting tomorrow. However, Administrator Honey will be on PRCC oral board for the supervisor position.
 - MCCAM meeting will be held next Tuesday; with the topic of conversation on the American Rescue Funds.
 - There may be a conflict with next weeks meeting and a potential conflict with a class on our payroll system. Administrator Honey indicated will try to figure out a way around it.

Administration Update – Continued:

- 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: Johnathan Nesmith and Brandon Tenney – hired Full-time; Peter Stone and Robert Jordan – Retirement
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 05.07.26.2021: \$256,629.56
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 05.11.2021: \$279,515.03
- UT Warrant to be approved for 05.11.2021: \$104,901.84
- UT TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:19 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 10:30 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:31 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 10:45 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Sanborn 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:

Administrator, Erika Honey

Peter K. Baldacci, Chairman

Laura J. Sanborn, Commissioner

Andre E. Cushing, III, Commissioner