

Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes June 29, 2021 2341
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Andre Cushing & Laura Sanborn 82°

Roll Call -

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

2021 Feasibility Study Bid Openings –

Commissioner Baldacci opened up the 2021_Feasibility Study Bids from the following two vendors who submitted their bids by the deadline.

- Haley Ward, Inc. with JET Architects \$38,000
- Artifex Architects & Engineers \$39,500

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

Facilities Update -

Facilities Director Brian MacDonald provided the following update on the generator:

- Testing of the generator this morning was a failure; Calls were made to CMD and to the electrician who is looking to put a transfer switch on the outside of the building.
- CMD people called to ask us to run it without supplying power. We're trying to pinpoint where the problem is. Up until the most recent event, it had run fine; something is amiss and we need to find it.
- It seems to be a coolant issue with the caterpillar engine. Until we find and fix the problem, the generator is not reliable, if we lost power today, we would be in the dark.

Sheriff's Update –

Sheriff Troy Morton reported the following on the corrections side of the house:

- In-house jail population is 185 (154 males and 31 females); 29 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, no county swaps and there **212** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- A challenge situation is there are a couple inmates hospitalized and we have to post staff 24/7. We are in communication with other counties, and we are all experiencing similar problems with lack of staff. Somerset County had a few of our inmates that became disruptive, so we had to move them back to our facilities.

Sheriff's Update – Continued:

- Programming is coming back together. We're making sure that providers have been vaccinated and their willing to follow the continued protocols within our facility.
- We're waiting for further guidance from the State CDC on any changes to jail protocols.
- Sheriff is hopeful that some COVID relief monies can be utilized for laundry services since we're unable to use helpers and the laundry process is taking longer
- MAT program is in this waiting pattern on the outside facility to come up with a policy on methadone and to see if funding comes through from the State. Our funding was cut \$62K this year so we need to find a way to come up with funding to maintain what we currently have.
- Members of our Board of Visitors, PCJ Program Sergeant Lebreton and Sheriff participated in an on-line training webinar with District Attorney Robinson from Androscoggin County. Unfortunately, this webinar had not been recorded as it would be helpful to pass on the information learned to others. Members involved in this webinar were impressed that Penobscot County tries to educate visitors how the facility is run given the physical challenges on campus.
- State Mental Health services looked at the empty beds at the State facilities. Recently, Mental Health Services sent three individuals to our facilities to work with one single inmate.
- Sheriff participated in a zoom call yesterday with many state officials talking about how to provide enhanced hotline services for individuals so they can call them when in crisis in the community.
- Sheriff reported on an assault that occurred on an inmate approximately ten days ago. This inmate had been arrested in a high-profile case in Bangor and was in a disagreement between two inmates. One inmate assaulted the other who had to be taken to a Bangor hospital, then transferred to Portland. Mental health issues may have played into this.
- Sheriff stated that we have no medical beds in the jail; the facility was never designed to have a medical unit. Our medical unit identified 13 individuals that have serious mental health issues and need inpatient medical treatment. We need more mental health services on the outside so that people don't become criminals and end up in jail.
- Sheriff feels that we need to change on how mental health is addressed in the state.

Sheriff's Update – Continued:

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

- Calls for service are drastically going up. This week included suicides and a motorcycle crash; burglary in Hermon and a substance use disorder involving a child.
- Today we celebrate two incredible employees of the Sheriff's Office.
 - Deputy Peter Stone who served us for 40 years both in corrections and patrol. Most of his career in the Patrol Division in central and northern Penobscot.
 - Detective Sergeant Robert Jordan is another incredible individual who served us for 35 years. He started in the jail and was promoted early in his career to jail security sergeant. Transferred over to patrol, then as an investigator. Det Sgt Jordan is thought of as one of the most in-depth investigators in our state.

Probate Update –

Registrar Renee Stupak reported the following:

- Probate Office had a staffing meeting yesterday and how to deal with the increasing cases being seen in the office.
 - The mental health crisis, drug overdoses and arrests has also affected the probate office because we're constantly doing guardianships.
 - A part-time staff associate would be helpful
- Registrar's Office will be accepting credit card payments. Start time undetermined
- State of Maine has agreed to hold off on implementing some of the laws until our high constitute meets.
- Commissioner Cushing requested a better understanding of the Probate Office. Commissioner Cushing feels it would be helpful if there was a report of Probate Staff and what their jobs description is; how accepting credit cards may help with the workflow; the work you've dealt with in the last three or four years. Registrar Stupak stated that she would do that; however, all probate courts do things a little differently. Our Probate Court runs everything through our Finance Department.

Public Comment -

Janet Drew – Concerned Citizen of York

Participant discussed the nationwide rise in jail deaths. Particularly in rural populations and involving more women. This sites the mental health crisis as the reason and we know that jails cannot be treatment centers for mental illness.

Participant is hopeful that grant money can be found to try to find resources for those with mental health issues.

UT Update –

Director Shaw Weeks presented the following on contracts:

- Request for signature on the Northern UT Kingman, Prentiss Municipal Solid Waste Contract with Ireland Rubbish
- Commission Sanborn moved to approve Sunset Development for the Greenfield Township Snow Removal vendor. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve Jerome Emery for the Kingman/Prentiss Snow Removal vendor. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve Tim Glidden for the Millinocket Snow Removal vendor. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Grand Falls Snow Removal Contract has gone out to bid again. We will present them at the July 20th Commissioner meeting.

Director Weeks reported on the following:

- The Grand Falls paving bid will be presented at the July 20th Commissioner meeting.
- Director Weeks spoke to Doug Reed from the Bureau of Parks and Land on the West Seboeis Road. A speed limit sign placed at the location of the property owner. The State has signed a purchase and sale agreement with the land owner on the other side of the road which would make it impossible to gate across the road. There are negotiations started with the other land owner.

Administration Update –

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- Communication placed in the Commissioners folders:
 - Reminder of the celebration of Deputy Peter Stone and Detective Sergeant Bob Jordan.
 - Correspondence of the partial payment of the PILT funding. In 2021, we have received the entire \$364K. Director Alexander has transferred all but \$175K into our PILT reserve.
 - Register Bulay requested I share with you LD 418 – *An Act to Create a Graduate Real Estate Transfer Tax*. This was a graduated system which there were some concerns as to how that was going to be administered. This was vetoed.
- Employment within the County:
 - Interviews will be held for the HR Clerical Assistant position the end of this week
 - Interviews will be held for the Finance Payroll Assistant position end of this week
 - Call taker position are still open with four open spaces
 - The jail custodian position has been reposted; unfortunately, the candidate did not work out.
 - Two Patrol Deputy positions are scheduled to close Friday
 - Corrections Officer positions are scheduled to close Friday
- Last week's meetings included:
 - HR Coordinator LaBree and Administrator Honey met with the Sheriff's Department last week on recruitment and retention strategies. We will be holding a Public Safety Career Fair on site in late July; we will have department heads to conduct on-site interviews to expedite the process.
 - Administrator Honey met with Sheriff Morton and DA Lynch to talk about coordinating a mental health and substance abuse forum. We are looking at late August.
 - Director Alexander and Administrator Honey participated on NACo reporting for ARP funding.
 - Regional broadband meeting was held last Friday; Bill Collins participated in the conversation.
 - Finishing up with department head meetings to discuss ideas with the ARP funds.
- This week's meetings will include:
 - Meeting with Piscataquis County IT Administrator and our IT Director and IT Manager will be participating in that discussion.
 - Director MacDonald and Administration Honey will be meeting with a realtor to review space options as we look for possible alternative spaces if needed for additional spaces.

Administration Update – Continued:

- Director MacDonald and Administrator Honey will follow up with Deeds vacating the map room to allow additional space for our Finance Department.
- There is a retirement party this Friday for long time Communications Supervisor Liz Ryan.
- Miscellaneous:
 - We have asked out Facilities director to look at expanding the services provided by our contracted cleaner to work in the jail; specifically common spaces, deep cleaning of the showers and trash.
 - We will be holding our employee benefit and open enrollment fair sometime in November.
 - Monday, July 5th County offices will be closed to all non-essential personnel in observance of the Fourth of July.
 - Beginning July, a proposal for COVID guidelines on mask wearing in the workplace is that all vaccinated individuals will no longer be required to wear a mask in the building. This will be for both employees and members of the public. This will be the honor system.
 - Troubleshooting the generator challenges this morning
 - We walked the “Y” parking lot and building last week. Clean up is necessary around the perimeter to the adjacent property as it is not safe. There are currently people residing on that property causing an overflow of debris to our property. Administrator Honey is requesting permission to contact the property owner of the apartment building to report on our efforts, in hopes that they, too, will assist in cleaning up their property. We have an estimate to include cutting down trees, cleaning the entire area, and monthly maintenance.
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve 4–5-day cleanup of the “Y” property in the amount not to exceed \$5,000. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- 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 Travis Miller – Hired full-time; William Auger and Jonathan Chiasson- Resignations; Eric Petterson – Payroll Status Change.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 06.25.2021: \$263,649.09
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 06.29.2021: \$183,108.57
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:15 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 and Treasurer Hiatt. Session ended at 10:24 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) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Administrator Honey, Director Lavoie, Director Alexander and Treasurer Hiatt. Session ended at 10:34 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:35 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 10:49 a.m.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 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