

**Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes September 7, 2021 2350  
9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Laura Sanborn & Andre Cushing 61°**

**Roll Call -**

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. from the Commissioners Chambers with all Commissioners, Administrator Erika Honey and Treasurer John Hiatt present.

**Approval of Minutes –**

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve August 24<sup>th</sup> and August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.

**Public Comment –**

*Debra Loring – Resident of Washington County/Previous Resident of Penobscot County*

Participant expressed concerns on the recent publication considering the purchase mobile units to help with the overcrowding situation in the jail. Participant's 26-year-old daughter is currently incarcerated at Two Bridges; however, for five months was housed in Penobscot County. At Two-Bridges there are more opportunities available to attend programming offered.

Participant recognizes the challenges of being overcrowded; however, strongly believes the purchase of mobile units is not the answer. In her opinion, these mobile units would exasperate PTSD, anxiety, mental health issues, claustrophobia for those inmates that suffer from them. Use the monies that would be spent on these units to pay for rehabilitation and other resources for first time offenders.

*Janet Drew – Citizen of York*

Participant understands the courts are backlogged for those awaiting trial. Overcrowding is real, but feels that a number of inmates do not belong in jail. Participant request is not to build a new jail, but instead find ways to help people in the community.

*Susan D'Alessandro – Resident of Millinocket*

Participant agrees the jails overcrowding is dire, but is against the purchase of mobile trailers. Participant feels the monies used should focus on human infrastructure and find ways to provide people the tools to change their life around.

**Probate Update –**

Register Renee Stupak reported the following:

- Probate department is fully staffed and personnel are being trained
- Month of August, there were 136 new cases with collected fees of \$17,748
- Departmental administrative meetings are being held monthly with Judge Faircloth on how she would like these cases served. The office will close 1-2 hours a month with dates and times posted
- Registrar Stupak reported that Judge Faircloth uses an “income driven approach” in getting fees being paid; an order of some amount of contribution.
- There was a public concern last month where a gentleman states some paperwork was filed pre-COVID and it was not properly filed by staff. This is a difficult situation where there have been some interactions with staff that have made them feel intimidated.

**Health Care Services for Penobscot County Jail Bid Opening –**

Commissioner Baldacci opened up the Health Care Services for Penobscot County Jail bids. The following three vendors submitted their bids by the deadline.

<b>Vendor</b>	<b>First Year</b>	<b>Second Year</b>	<b>Third Year</b>
AYA Healthcare	This bid did not comply to what was asked on the RFP		
MedPro	\$1,744,496.04	\$1,796,830.92	\$1,850,735.88
Alternative Correctional Healthcare	\$813,600	\$829,872	\$846,470

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

**Sheriff's Update –**

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

- In-house jail population is 199; 59 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, no county swaps and **199** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- Staffing is down 11 correctional officers; an additional three officers are out on medical
- Overcrowding is still an issue; this weekend we had 25 new arrests brought in the facility
- Two jails boarding some of our inmates have called mandating we take them back to our facility due to their disruptiveness

**Sheriff's Update – Continued:**

- There was damage to one of our cells this weekend. Director MacDonald came in to assess and is working on repairs so that the cell could be operable
- Inmates are continuing to be evaluated for serious substance use issues; there were two inmates in the hospital this weekend
- Commissioner Sanborn, Administrator Honey and Sheriff met with Chief Justice Stanfill and several judges of the court last week. The meeting was fairly productive with better understanding of the challenges the jail and courts are all facing
- The meeting with state mental health providers indicated we have five inmates that should be immediately moved to a mental health facility. Due to their refusal to participate in COVID protocols, the State will not accept them as patients.
- There are two positive tests in the jail; our COVID protocols have remained the same
- Commissioner Baldacci asked the Sheriff if we should have an employee vaccination policy due to the risk for our officers of unvaccinated inmates. Sheriff would not support mandated vaccines for our staff as this is a personal decision made by individuals for various reasons. Commissioner Cushing also raised his concerns with this type of policy.
- Commissioner Cushing voiced his frustration with the lack of mental health beds provided from the State to be used for our needs.
- Commissioner Sanborn requested that we provide information to the public on how many arrests are happening here in Penobscot County

**Public Hearing for Remote Public Meetings –**

Commissioner Baldacci opened the public hearing on the Remote Participation in Public Proceedings at 9:58 a.m.

Commissioner Baldacci reported that LD32 is “An Act Regarding Remote Participation in Public Proceedings” was passed and it requires governmental agencies to prepare a policy on remote participation. This hearing is part of the statute’s requirements and this proposed policy has been publicized.

Susan D’Alessandro requests that public participation continues to be allowed in these meetings. Commissioner Baldacci stated this is under state law for us to have a policy to show what the procedures are to do that. We believe it is important and valuable to have remote participation for the public in a county that is geographically as large as Penobscot.

Janet Drew expressed her thanks for putting forth this policy as it shows transparency.

Commissioner Sanborn moved to close the hearing at 10:02 a.m. with no further discussion. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Commissioner Cushing moved to adopt the policies presented for remote meeting participation. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.  
Signed.

**NWDB Update –**

Executive Director Joanna Russell reported the following:

**Monitoring of SFY19 & 20 - PY19 Monitoring Results – No reports from DAFS or MDOL yet.**

- DAFS review conducted a year ago showing no outstanding financial issues. We are waiting results of two program reviews from BES.

**Procurement update**

- The NWDB have developed two RFPs. (WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker service delivery combined with the One Stop Operator responsibility, and WIOA Title 1B Youth service delivery.)

**NWDB Hiring Process**

- The NWDB executive committee will present to the full board a plan for hiring the new executive director on September 9.

**Connecting with Opportunities – Opioid National Emergency Grant update**

- NWDB ONEG Program Coordinator Ben Hawkins the NWDB resigned effective September 1.

**Conference**

- The NWDB staff will present at the Northeast Society for Human Resource Management, (NESHRM) conference. The panel will share resources and information related to employment potential for individuals in recovery from substance use disorder and the “Recovery Friendly Employers” initiative.

**The Next NWDB meeting is scheduled for September 9**

Erin Benson – Director of Workforce Services at EMDC presented the following on PY20 (July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021):

- Served a total of 251 clients (106 adults, 62 dislocated, 61 youth and 22 connecting with opportunities)
- A total of 3,291 services (326 support, 69 work experiences (when EMDC pays the wage for somebody to work at a business), 2 OJT (on job training when EMDC pays half the

**NWDB Update – Continued:**

wage) and 172 training (a degree or certification training to include short term and long-term training) were provided. Services include: automobile repairs, transportation services, gas money, clothing, tools, etc. There were 81 people employed.

- EMDC has an Economic Opportunity Response Team that meets with local businesses to discuss ways that EMDC can serve them.
- EMDC has a Young Mainers Workforce Academy that has served 51 youth thus far
- Workforce Development staff are participating in communities to develop a project for the Working Communities Challenge grant.
- EMDC has been participating in Penobscot County's Prosecutorial Diversion program for several months.
- EMDC is partnering with EMCC to design and implement a free 8-week program in the Katahdin region called Destination You.
- Erin then reported on success stories of programs that are offered
- Administrator Honey and Captain Clukey will contact Erin to see what requirements are needed in order to receive assistance to help fill correctional officer positions.

**2022 Budget Presentation –**

Finance Director Judy Alexander presented the following overview after meeting with all the department heads:

- Wages
  - Eight and a half new positions (1-EMA, 1-PRCC, 1.5-DA, 1-Buildings, 1-Jail, 1-Probate, 1-Maintenance and 1-IT)
  - Chief Deputy wage to go from \$79,000 to \$85,000
  - 2% COLA applied to last week's wages
- Benefits
  - 5% increase for health insurance
  - Worker comp has same increase as last year
- Expenses
  - Significant increase in the jail budget due is to anticipated increase from \$650K to \$1.6M for boarding of prisoners
  - A new department has been added for budget purposes for employee benefits
  - Building improvements was increased to \$175K
  - Capital improvement plan will be discussed further when presented
  - Some program donations requests have increased
  - Departmental expenditures have increased of \$1.38M over last year

**2022 Budget Presentation – Continued:**

- Revenue increases are \$257K over last year – making a net increase of \$1.125M
- Today's tax cap is 6.65% - which is subject to change at the end of September when the state releases their Growth Factor
- Requests
  - Provide any changes of budget committee members to Director Alexander to update
  - Leave your budget books in the chambers so that any changes made can be placed in your books
  - Let Director Alexander know if you would like a copy of this budget digitally
- Commissioners requested a copy of the budget notes to be able to review.

**Administration Update –**

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- Communication:
  - Our office received a call in regards to some poor road conditions in Exeter
  - A request from Richard Estabrook of the State Claims Commission looking to appoint a County Commissioner to be a third member in Hampden on November 3<sup>rd</sup>.
  - Notice of Eastern Maine Emergency Preparedness Expo taking place at the Cross Insurance Center in Bangor on September 11 from 9 am to 3 pm
  - Katahdin Broadband 5-year finance operating performance as requested by Commissioner Cushing. UT Director Shaw Weeks will be providing an update to the Commissioners about broadband planning and discussions that are taking place in the UT
- Employment within the County:
  - Our Assistant Finance Director Linda Alley started last Monday
  - With the conditional offers placed, PRCC looks to be fully staffed
  - Correctional Officer recruitment is continuing
- Last week's meetings:
  - A roundtable with other County Administrators was held last week. We discussed progress within each county with ARPA funding. Some counties have solicited for external funding, if that's what their county has chosen to do with some of the funds. A part-time Grant Manager advertisement will go out to help with out with our funds.

**Administration Update – Continued:**

- Administrator Honey participated with Sheriff Morton and Commissioner Sanborn meeting with Chief Justice Stanfill
- Administrator Honey, along with Director Alexander and HR Coordinator LaBree participated in Maine PERS meeting regarding LD1103 proposal. Once we have the finer details of the proposal, we will present those for your consideration.
- This week's meetings:
  - Administrator Honey will be meeting with Town Managers of Orono and Veazie
  - MCCA Risk Pool and MCCA Meeting will be held Wednesday via Zoom
  - There is a time and attendance demonstration this Friday
- Miscellaneous:
  - The PRCC union contract was voted on Friday and approved. We will have the signing at next Tuesday's Commissioners meeting.
  - EMA Director Bradley Nuding looked into changing the lettering on their trailer from "MASS CASUALTY" to something less dramatic. The cost of that would be \$1K which is not budgeted. After further discussion, it was decided to leave signage as is.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Kendrick McCarthy, Sara Rogers, Suzanne Labun, Brian MacDonald and Jonathan Tenney – Payroll Status Changes; Benjamin Hawkins and Scott Basso – Resignations; Lori Renzullio - Summer Internship Ended
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 09.07.2021: \$276,545.21
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 09.07.2021: \$269.13
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 09.03.2021: \$77,569.94
- Unorganized Territory Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- Unorganized Territory TIF Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the warrants as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:45 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 Erika Honey, and Sheriff Morton. Session ended at 11:15 a.m.

**Administration Update – Continued:**

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:17 a.m., under 1 M.R.S.A. § 405 (6) (A) Personnel Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 2-0. Present were: Commissioners, Administrator Erika Honey, Director Chris Lavoie and Deputy Josh Lilley. Session ended at 11:22 a.m.

**Action Item –**

Commissioner Cushing moved to appoint Commissioner Laura Sanborn to be the third member of the State Claims Commission for hearings in Hampden on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Commissioner Baldacci seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 2-0.

**Meeting Adjourned-**

Commissioner Sanborn moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Cushing 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