

**Penobscot County Commissioners' Meeting Minutes October 5, 2021 2354**  
**9:00 AM Commissioners Peter Baldacci, Laura Sanborn & Andre Cushing 46°**

**Roll Call -**

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

Commissioner Cushing present at 9:15 a.m.

**Public Comment –**

The following members of Penobscot County Cares presented the following:

***Sean Faircloth – Executive Director of Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center***

Participant stated that he is representing a coalition of organizations seeking support of Penobscot County Government in relation to the crises we are facing – COVID, mental health and opioid. Together Place Peer Run Recovery Center is located on Second Street in Bangor that staffs Certified Intentional Peer Support Specialists (CIPSS).

Participant requests Commissioners to make an investment in the community by providing funds for additional CIPSS, outreach staff for mental health, and funds to weatherize buildings. Participant is requesting that half of the ARPA funds received assist organizations that address this major health crisis in our region.

***Scott Pardy – President and Owner of Fresh Start Sober Living Houses in Bangor and Brewer***

Participant states there are six recovery residences in Bangor for people that want recovery. These people come from jail, prison, Bangor homeless shelter and detox centers. Housing is difficult for people in recovery where it is safe and affordable. There is a need for more recovery houses as participant receives over 300 applications a year, but only has 56 rooms/beds available. Participant receives \$1500 a month from a small grant to help support some of the charity beds taken in. Each resident is required to pay membership dues which help cover some expenses and pay for the houses.

***Monique Gautreau – Bangor Resident/Volunteer***

Participant states she volunteers at Fresh Start Sober Living and previously at Penobscot County Jail. Participant is requesting that 50% of the ARPA funds received should be earmarked to address housing, mental health issues and organizations that help with substance use disorders.

**Public Comment – Continued:**

***Jen Dimmock – Needlepoint Sanctuary***

Participant works with the homeless providing clean needles and Narcan. This is a nonprofit outreach group that has no building to work out of and has few staff members. This group tries to make sure the homeless are safe, warm and fed.

***Janet Drew – Resident of York***

Participant stated that every part of this country should be having this same conversation taking place at today's Commissioner's meeting.

***Jenna Mehnert Baker –***

Participant reported on the jail being used to house those with mental health issues. Sheriff Morton has repeatedly reported that he has requested those inmates be placed in beds at mental health facilities and not housed in the jail. Participant feels it is now time that the Commissioners step up and push this issue to the State on behalf of your citizens.

***Brian Pitman – Private Citizen***

Participant voiced support of this coalitions advocacy for increased funding that supports housing, drug and mental health treatment as opposed to increase funding in the jail.

***Whitney Parrish – Health Equity Alliance (HEAL)***

Participant speaks as the policy and advocacy director of Health Equity Alliance. This service provides overdose prevention, materials, education as well as safer use supplies. Participant is requesting for a public process connecting to how these ARPA funds are spent.

***Anthony Jackson – Co-Director of Peace and Justice Center***

Participant is requesting that the majority of ARPA funds go to affordable housing. It is important for those people who lost resources, as they were already in a far worse condition before COVID hit. Participant believes there should be a public forum to determine where these funds are going and how they're used.

**Public Comment – Continued:**

***Ginger Collins – Co-founder Pir2Peer Recovery Center***

Participant states that this program stands for people in recovery to peers to others in these communities. This program began with the overdose condition in the Millinocket/Katahdin region and strives to bring recovery services to these regions. With the overdose rate in Millinocket on the rise, participant looks for funding to help with housing, food and staffing. Funding would start a pilot program in the Patten/Sherman area so that individuals can access peer-to-peer meetings online.

***Michelle Anderson - Co-founder Pir2Peer Recovery Center***

Participant added from northern Maine, it takes up to two-hours to drive to Bangor. There is no public transportation and some people have no vehicle to get to appointments in Bangor. Participant's mission is to report that northern Maine needs funding as their needs are great.

Commissioner Sanborn reported that the Penquis Steering Committee is meeting tonight with a new board member from your area. Commissioner Sanborn will attend the Council Meeting next week in Millinocket and keep you in mind.

***Heidi Wheaton – Executive Director Breaking the Cycle***

Participant reported that Breaking the Cycle is a level three recovery residency helping women in recovery in Millinocket. Participate is looking for ARPA funding for resources such as: 30–60 day programming, crisis units, medically assisted treatment, substance abuse counselors, and mental health counselors.

***Josh Keppler – Poor People's Campaign***

Participant requests that the County Commissioners commit to spending the majority of the ARPA funds to address the primary issues that have been addressed with this coalition. Participant specifically requests that housing issue be more accessible so people can build a stable life.

***David Patrick – Co-Director & Co-Founder Racial Equity and Justice***

Participant states that solutions need to be met for housing, mental health treatments and support.

**Public Comment – Continued:**

***Robert Kearns – The People Streetlight Outreach Program***

Participant's program supplies the homeless with tents, sleeping bags, tarps while looking for housing. Participant would like to see the buildings that are being condemned in the area purchased and remodeled.

***Michael Tuller – Bangor Friends of Affordable Housing***

Participant supports that the majority of ARPA funding goes towards the major issues of mental health, drug abuse and housing. Participant spoke on an organization called "Build Zero" that may be coming to Maine.

Commissioner Baldacci responded that he and Administrator Honey met with Bangor's acting City Manager and the mayor a few weeks ago to discuss how we can work together on problems to assist with homelessness and additional programs. The priority will be the people who are impacted the most by the COVID epidemic. It is important to stay within the rules of the Treasury Department; a priority of helping people and agencies who have been harmed by the COVID epidemic.

Commissioner Baldacci pointed out that part of the rules is that these funds are not used to replace items in a regular budget, but used for items not included in a budget.

Commissioner Baldacci stated that it is very impressive hearing one after another people who are showing their commitment and passion. It's not about a paycheck, it's really caring about the cause and it's very impressive what you're doing with very little. We will try to help.

**PRCC Update –**

Director Chris Lavoie and Deputy Director Lilley requested approval to start Phase 1 of the radio system to include southern sites.

- Commissioner Cushing moved to approve Director Lavoie to sign the contract with Radio Communications Management for Phase One to be started in the amount of \$1,086,368. Commissioner Sanborn 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 193; 50 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, no county swaps and **185** inmates in Pre-trial Services.
- Seven inmates housed are deemed appropriate for mental health beds
- The jail is in an COVID 19 outbreak status with 12 inmates testing positive
- Eleven staff members have tested positive with COVID 19 with an additional five listed as close contacts. More than half of the officers have been vaccinated
- Due to the COVID outbreak, the PACE program has been moved a month ahead
- MDOC is refusing to accept nine inmates due to out outbreak status

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

- Patrol has seen the rise catalytic converter thefts, drug cases and domestic violence cases
- There are two open patrol deputy positions open (Northern and Central)
- A Ford SUV patrol vehicle with 18k miles is out of commission
- Seven of the eight vehicles that were ordered in July are in
- Patrol has responding to 20+ details assisting with community events
- Sheriff recognized Deputy Luke Gross on his tragic passing last week. Deputy Gross had worked for PCSO years ago.

**Maine State Retirement (Dept. 18) Budget Presentation –**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Maine State Retirement (Dept. 18) Budget for the 2022 year. Department 18 requested amount stayed the same as previous years.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$2,350. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Health and Safety (Dept. 19) Budget Presentation -**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Health and Safety (Dept. 19) Budget for the 2022 year. Department 19 requested amount stayed the same as previous years.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$3,000. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**County Health Insurance - Retirees (Dept. 22) Budget Presentation –**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented County Health Insurance – Retirees (Dept. 22) Budget for the 2022 year. Department 22 increase 14.58% due to increased number of retirees eligible for benefits.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$55,000. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Bridge Account (Dept. 24) Budget Presentation –**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Bridge Account (Dept. 24) Budget for the 2022 year. Department 24 requested amount stayed the same as previous years.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$100. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Soil Conservation (Dept. 38) Budget Presentation –**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Soil Conservation (Dept. 38) Budget for the 2022 year. Soil Conservation was increased 3.46% due to normal COLA and benefit increases.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$72,998. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Labor Relations (Dept. 39) Budget Presentation –**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Labor Relations (Dept. 39) Budget for the 2022 year. The requested amount was decreased from previous years.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$4,000. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

**Wage Adjustment (Dept. 40) Budget Presentation -**

- Finance Director Judy Alexander presented Wage Adjustment (Dept. 40) Budget for the 2022 year. Department 40 requested amount stayed the same as previous years.
- Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve \$30,000. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Discussion followed to set the Budget Committee Meeting date for November 9 at 5:00 p.m.

**Administration Update –**

Administrator Honey reported on the following:

- Communication:
  - Correspondence from Brookfield Renewable, Black Bear Hydro Partners, National Guard Bureau, Ripogenus Hydro Electric Project and Penobscot Mills Hydroelectric Project.
  - Annette Dodd requested permission to attach flat panels on the Franklin Street wall for the upcoming project. Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the request as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Miscellaneous:
  - Over the last few months, the commissioners have been in discussion on how to proceed with ARPA funding. Second interviews are being held for a Grant Manager. This person focus will be on community forums, strategic planning with the commissioners, and supporting the voices we heard today. Hopefully this Grant Manager will be in place within the next two weeks getting familiar with ARPA funds on information we've already collected internally. Then be able to go out into the different locations and hear from the public in the December – January time frame.
  - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve the Wellness Center Policy as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 10.01.2021: \$268,079.41
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 10.05.2021: \$549,355.09
- 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 Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Payroll Change Notices signed for: Chad Foley – Resignation; Ty Babb – Retirement; Richard Smith – Hired Full-time Corrections; Beau Seekins, Bradley Fitzgerald, Francis Surdick and Mary Anne O'Kelly – Payroll changes.

**Approval of Minutes –**

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve September 28, 2021 meeting minutes. 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) (D) Contract Matter. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approved passed 3-0. Present were: Commissioners, Administrator Erika Honey, Treasurer Hiatt and Director Shaw Weeks. Session ended at 10:59 a.m.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:00 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.

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 11:16 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, Administrator Erika Honey, Treasurer Hiatt and Attorney Tim Pease. Session ended at 11:44 a.m.

Action Taken –

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve process of procuring licensed and qualified professional to perform construction management services for Penobscot County Jail project. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Cushing moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 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