

Roll Call -

Commissioner Baldacci opened the meeting at 9:00 AM from the Commissioners Chambers with all Commissioners and Administrator Honey present.

Approval of Minutes –

Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve October 19 and October 26, 2021 meeting minutes. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.

Public Comment –

Susan D'Alessandro – Citizen of Millinocket

Participant reported another overdose occurred in Millinocket yesterday. Participant reiterates that people with mental health and drug programs do not belong in jail; there needs to be a partnership between law enforcement and treatment.

A statement was read from Janet Drew – Citizen of York

Participant states per the request, testimony and letters signed by 35 local organizations, half of the ARPA money be invested in care and prevention, not in surveillance and punishment of whole families and communities.

Doug Dunbar – Concerned Citizen

Participant reported on how community organizations have come together with a request to create public process to discuss community needs and ways to better use ARPA dollars. Combined with other resources and leverage to secure additional funding we can change and save countless lives and make our communities healthier, safer and much more livable. We know the solutions, we have to invest in the solutions, or our jail will continue to be chronically overcrowded. We have the money to make significant investments; if we don't do it now, when will we?

Donna Gagne – Citizen of Greenfield Township

Participant reported on the Toby White junkyard in Greenfield Township. The DA's Office sent a letter to Mr. White to clean up the property by November 1, 2021. Participant provided updated pictures of the property validating that the property is still out of compliance.

UT Update –

Director Shaw Weeks presented the following:

- Following up on Donna Gagne comments, Director Weeks will follow up with Mr. White as well as the District Attorney's Office as what steps should be taken as he is out of compliance.
- The Town of Medway mailed in their contract for snow removals, and we've yet to receive them as of yet.
- Snow plow rates for this year's fiscal year were presented to the Commissioners for their review.
- Clarification from Peter Jamieson's report last week. Charlotte Mace and Johnathan Poole at ME DECD will be referring their new business and investment interests in the Katahdin region to Mr. Jamieson first, rather than to specific properties/mill sites.
- Establishing our own fee for junkyard permits would require an official ordinance.

Penobscot County Jail Discussion –

Members of Brewer City Council (Michele Daniels, Soubanh Phanthav, Jerry Goss, Joe Ferris and Jenn Morin) and Public Safety Director Jason Moffitt came before the Commissioners to discuss correspondence that was sent in October.

Mayor Daniels requested this meeting to start a conversation that needs to be taken serious on the jail overcrowding. The jail has been overcrowded for a long time, but today it is critical. Our law enforcement officers are dealing with multiple repeat offenders that have no consequence to action.

Director Jason Moffitt reported as working on the front lines, how law enforcement has changed greatly over the last 15 years. Law enforcement has already severely curtailed the arrest activity that, in the past, would have been a custodial arrest; i.e. operating after suspension, thefts, and misdemeanor offenses. What is being dealt with are people with 10 or 11 active sets of bail conditions that are continuously dealt with. There is no consequence because people know the jails are full. There is now difficulty finding a county that will take our prisoner for us when needed for public safety reasons. Director Moffitt added that police chiefs are working in cooperation with the Sheriff, speaking to him daily, trying to sort all these issues out together.

Penobscot County Jail Discussion – Continued:

Commissioner Baldacci stated that one of the major problems is that the court literally almost shut down for close to a year and backed the system up tremendously. Commissioner Baldacci has participated in conversations with the courts, clerks, judges and prosecutors to see how we can work together to move things along. It became evident, that it isn't helpful to ship inmates to other facilities because it delays having their cases resolved.

The Sheriff has kept the Commissioners up to date on the overcrowding problems in the jail. The Commissioner of Corrections say that we're operating beyond our license and that we can't continue to allow this to happen. We recently had a feasibility study on the old Y building and property. The report states that that some of the Y can be rehabilitated for office space; office space is not as restrictive as jail requirements. We will be putting out an RFP looking at the possibility of building an addition to the jail that would have increased capacity, as well as using the old Y building for office space. Due to the COVID outbreak in the jail, ARPA monies can assist us with the renovation programs that make it safer for inmates and our employees. Our new grant manager is going to make sure we comply with the federal program and look at additional grants.

Commissioner Cushing stated that what had started 7-8 years ago would have come to fruition by now. Unfortunately, it hasn't. What we're learning to do is how do we manage the population that we currently have? Short term, one of the challenges faced is the state's failure to take prisoners that are in our custody that do not belong in any jail, but in a facility that can address their mental health and substance abuse needs. Commissioner Cushing requests to direct some of your concerns to the Department of Health and Human Services to deal with issues that they are better prepared to handle.

Councilman Goss stated that this conversation started years ago and it is felt that we're beyond conversation. Time is now to come to a resolution. The largest check the City of Brewer writes is to Penobscot County and right now both the Court and Jail need to be fixed. Public safety is a huge concern with the lack of ability to put people in the jail; and secondly the court system is too slow.

Sheriff's Update –

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

- Thank you to the City of Brewer and representatives from Veazie that are here to speak about the challenges we are facing in the jail and communities.

Sheriff's Update – Continued:

- In-house jail population is 173; 42 boarded out to other facilities, no federal inmates, no county swaps and **196** inmates in Pre-trial Services. There are 15 Maine Department of Corrections inmates in our facilities
- Penobscot County continues to provide regional booking services
- Two inmates have tested positive for COVID and are in isolation
- Universal testing is still taking place
- Our current medical provider is in communication and working with the new medical contractor

Sheriff Troy Morton reported the following from the law enforcement side of the house:

- Continuing with multiple catalytic converters theft incidents
- Multiple drug related incidents
- Patrol's new Ford vehicles are in and working on changing out lights, etc.
- Northern Patrol Deputy position has a conditional offer of employment
- Southern Patrol Deputy position had 15 applicants; interviews were held and a decision should be forthcoming shortly
- Retired Sheriff Glenn Ross participated in our Fall Crew Inspections

Administration Update -

Administrator Honey presented the following:

- Communication:
 - Comment from Janet Drew
 - Letter from resident of Greenfield Township, Donna Gagne
- Last week's meetings:
 - Corrections line negotiations; more to follow next week
 - Follow up on a comment from last weeks meeting on the cultural assessment in the jail. This is part of our PREA grant and the assessment will be conducted by 3rd party vendor
- This week's meetings:
 - Participated in the LD1654 (An Act to Stabilize County Jail Funding) discussion with members of MACCAM, MSA and MCCA
 - Grant Manager and Administrator Honey will be meeting today with EMDC

Administration Update – Continued:

- Next Week's meetings:
 - Budget Committee meeting will be held next Wednesday
 - County Offices will be closed next Thursday for Veterans Day
- HR:
 - Employee Benefit Open enrollment starts today
 - Health and Safety Fair will be next Wednesday
 - COVID vaccine clinic is scheduled for tomorrow which is open to both employees and the public
 - Another booster clinic will be held in December
- Miscellaneous:
 - Commissioner Sanborn moved to approve changes to Maine PERS for dispatchers as presented. Commissioner Cushing seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
 - The RFP for the jail facility renovated will be going out with a closing date in mid-December
 - A request to amend our 2021 holiday schedule for FOP contract participants will be reviewed next week
 - Spirit of America awards will be presented on December 7th since it should be a short meeting
 - Reminder to Commissioner Sanborn that the State Claims Board is scheduled for tomorrow
- Payroll Warrant to be approved for 10.29.2021: \$257,226.87
- A/P Warrant to be approved for 11.02.2021: \$ 481,119.00
- UT Warrant to be approved for: NONE
- UT 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: Kabryn Sturdee – Resignation; Lucas Babcock – Hired F/T Corrections Officer; Tyler Cockran and Duncan Kane – Payroll Status Changes

Executive Session---Commissioner Sanborn made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10:33 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, Director Alexander, Treasurer Hiatt and Sheriff Morton. Session ended at 10:45 a.m.

Action Taken –

- Commissioner Cushing moved to approve Central Maine Auction to auction vehicles for the Sheriff/County at \$100 per vehicle. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve passed 3-0.
- Commissioner Cushing moved to approve a hazard/premium pay for Patrol Division beginning October 1, 2021 and ending October 30, 2021 for \$3.00 per hour worked for all Patrol Division plus an additional \$1.00 per hour worked for Patrol Division who have been vaccinated or have approved exemption. Commissioner Sanborn seconded the motion. Vote to approve 3-0.

Meeting Adjourned-

Commissioner Cushing moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:55 a.m. with no further business on the agenda. Commissioner Sanborn 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