

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
(Special Informational Session)
SEPTEMBER 17, 2009

PRESENT: Commissioners Donald P. Berry, Sr. (Chairman), Amy R. Fowler and William D. Shorey. Also present was Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover, Deputy Treasurer Karen Trussell and 2010 Budget Committee Member and Selectmen for Town of Unity James Kenney.

Commissioner Berry opened the court session at 9:00 a.m.

Grant Matching Reserve Account

V. Stover brought to the Commissioners' attention that EMA Director Dale Rowley will be going for a grant and needs \$120,000.00 in grant matching funds for the new EMA Building project. There was already \$60,000.00 in the Grant Reserve so another \$60,000.00 needs to be added. Technology Consultant James Arseneau is applying for a grant that will require \$30,000.00 in matching. A. Fowler mentioned that H.R./Payroll Director Michelle Wadsworth has found a grant opportunity for office equipment for the Sheriff's Department through Maine Municipal Association for \$3,000.00 and if the County applied for that, matching funds are required. A. Fowler suggested adding at least \$1,000.00 to that reserve and possibly more. Commissioner Shorey thought there should be \$100,000.00 in that reserve account. James Kenney stated that the Town of Unity had found money that they didn't even know about.

Commissioner Berry explained that last year the Budget Committee did not want to fund the new consoles for the Communications Center so the Commissioners, at the recommendation of the Committee, took it out of a Reserve account. Commissioner Shorey commented that some people think that counties don't need grants. There was a brief discussion of searching for a grant for the proposed new Sheriff's Office. The total for Grant Matching Reserve (0167) is \$111,000.00, with \$60,000.00 for the EMA building, \$1,000.00 for the potential Sheriff's desks grant and \$50,000.00 for other grant matching as needed.

Employment Security Account

K. Trussell informed the Commissioners that at the end of the year there will be no money left in the Employment Security Reserve. Commissioner Berry suggested adding \$11,500.00 into that reserve account. The other Commissioners agreed.

Severance

K. Trussell said that the target goal for the Severance Reserve is \$13,800.00 to \$27,600.00 and currently there is \$14,745.51 in that reserve. Commissioner Berry stated that he would like to keep that reserve at \$30,000.00. Commissioner Fowler thought maybe \$10,000.00 should be added and that would bring the reserve up to \$25,000.00. All were in agreement.

Vehicle Emergency Replacement

K. Trussell said that there is \$2,952.07 in the Vehicle Emergency Reserve and the target goal is \$11,500.00 to \$18,400.00. Commissioner Fowler asked if this account has been touched in the last few years. K. Trussell mentioned that the van purchased for Facilities Management was bought with funds from this reserve. It was agreed to add \$7,000.00 to the Vehicle Emergency Reserve.

Technology

Commissioner Berry asked K. Trussell to get a printout of the Technology Reserve account. Commissioner Fowler said that, as of now, there was \$139,500.00 in that reserve. J. Kenney asked which Commissioners had established those targets for the reserves. K. Trussell said it was back when Jethro Pease, Greg Boetsch and John Hyk were County Commissioners.

Future Land and Buildings

K. Trussell said the Future Land and Buildings Reserve has \$275,239.53 in it. There was brief discussion between the Commissioners and J. Kenney. Commissioner Fowler encouraged all of the Budget Committee members to tour the Jail/ Sheriff buildings. There was a brief discussion on the fuel cost and savings by the Commissioners. It was agreed not to fund this reserve.

Salary/Pay Scale Discussion

Commissioner Berry said there were two requests from the Registers of Probate and Deeds for significant increases in their salaries. He explained that Register of Deeds Deloris Page has been in that position for 36 years and she is currently getting paid \$40,499.00 and the Register of Probate, who has 23 years of service in that department but only one year as the Register, is being paid \$40,498.00. Both are requesting \$45,810.00 for 2010, which is approximately a \$5,000.00 increase. Commissioner Shorey said that Commissioner Berry has done a good job with pay scales and that he would like to get it equalized. He asked Commissioner Berry to propose a scale for these two positions. Commissioner Berry explained the past pay scale system. He stated that he does not like the COLA system and that the Commissioners have worked on a pay scale system that will do away with COLA's. J. Kenney told the Commissioners where he retired from and what the pay scale was. Commissioner Shorey briefly discussed the system that is used over in Searsport and what he has observed since coming to the county is that "it is a different animal." Commissioner Berry said that the Commissioners are trying to get away from having everyone's salary being based purely related to COLA. J. Kenney asked how many employees are employed at the County of Waldo. K. Trussell stated that there are 73 full-time and 22 part-time employees.

The commissioners discussed the pay increases that were requested by the Registers of Deeds and Probate and agreed that it is a good idea to create a pay scale that is equitable both. J. Kenney said that back in his "prior life," they didn't count years; they counted responsibilities. Commissioner Fowler stated that this is what the commissioners are shooting for. She also asked Commissioner Berry to do a pay scale for both the Registers of Deeds and Probate and offered to help out if needed. Commissioner Berry suggested setting the salary for the Register of Deeds at \$45,810.00 and the salary for the Register of Probate at \$43,333.00. He said that they would come back next week on September 23rd for the final figures for the 2010 budget. He also asked K. Trussell to plug in all of the numbers in the budget for next week.

CORRESPONDENCE

Present for this discussion was Deputy County Clerk Veronica Stover.

1. A memo was received from County Clerk Barbara Arseneau noting that Human Resource/Payroll Director Michelle Wadsworth will complete 5 years of employment on October 12, 2009, with a pay increase to \$34,462.48 at that level. The Commissioners noted this.

2. A letter was received from the State of Maine Board of Corrections regarding Investment Funds Contributions. K. Trussell explained that there are two payment times – one at the end of November and the other at the end of April. Commissioner Fowler asked how it worked for K. Trussell. K. Trussell explained that full payment would be in November when the money is there, because in April, it may be borrowed money on Jail funds. Commissioner Berry said that it was interesting that in their statement they said, “The first payment of \$457,573.00 is due November 30, 2010 and the second payment of \$457,573.00 is due April 30, 2010.” He wanted it sent back and to tell them that this is an incorrect piece of information.

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to make the payment to the Board of Corrections Investment Funds Contributions on the required dates. Unanimous.**

K. Trussell informed everyone that with the figures that she plugged in on the Commissioners side of the budget is only up 0.17%. Commissioner Shorey thought everyone did a job well done.

3. A reminder has been sent by EMA Director Dale Rowley that the Committee meeting of the New County Public Safety Building/EOC is on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 at 8:00 A.M. at the EMA office.

4. The Commissioners noted that there will be another special court session for the County Commissioners is scheduled for 10:00 A.M. on September 23, 2009.

4. The minutes have been transcribed for the tax abatement hearing held on August 11, 2009 for Randall and Zoe Hendrix vs. the Town of Northport on August 11, 2009.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to accept the minutes for the August 11, 2009 tax abatement hearing held for Randall and Zoe Hendrix vs. Town of Northport. Unanimous.**

COMMISSIONERS BUSINESS:

Commissioner Shorey asked V. Stover to call Brenda at the Searsport Water District to get contact information for Lewis Sirois and to mail him the County’s audit statement along with constructing a letter. He also asked if they would be getting new inserts for the budget binders and was told that there would be new insert. Commissioner Fowler asked if the budget summary and percentage sheet could be on different color paper – something that will make it stand out.

Commissioner Fowler discussed the MCCA by-laws and explained that when they changed their by-laws, dues were discussed along with several different ways to handle the dues. One way would be that regardless of population, each county would pay \$8,000.00 in dues to MCCA in order to have liability insurance coverage, or every county could pay \$4,000.00 and then pay according to population. “The big counties would take a hit,” she said.

Commissioner Shorey thought that everyone did a good job with the budget this year but he would be in favor of the Commissioners drafting a cover letter to put in the front of the 2010 Budget for the Budget Committee. He thought it would be a very nice thing to do and wondered about putting a statement in there that one of the goals that the Commissioners worked hard at was to get the budget flat-funded. He felt that it would be good to educate them early. All of the Commissioners were in favor of this. Commissioner Berry said that he would put it together on behalf of the Board of

Commissioners. It was also noted that there is not much “wiggle room” in this budget. K. Trussell mentioned that this year there will be no room for budgets to go over, so they need to be watched. D. Berry asked K. Trussell to send up a memo to all of the departments just to remind them.

K. Trussell informed the Commissioners that the Town of Freedom paid their property taxes today.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to adjourn the meeting at 12:34 P.M. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Veronica Stover
Veronica Stover, Deputy County Clerk