

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
(SPECIAL SESSION)
AUGUST 26, 2010**

PRESENT: Commissioners Amy R. Fowler, Donald P. Berry and William D. Shorey. Also present were Sheriff Scott Story and County Clerk Barbara L. Arseneau.

Commissioner Berry called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

MISCELLANEOUS COMMISSIONERS BUSINESS:

1. CORRECTIONS PAY SCALE/COLA DISCUSSION:

Commissioner Berry explained that he had expressed concern over the pay scale that was voted on during the August 24, 2010 Commissioners Court session. He stated that he had gone back and started reworking the Corrections-related pay scales yesterday morning and continued into the afternoon. A. Fowler joined him later in the afternoon to work on these.

The Commissioners reviewed the Corrections pay scale revision. D. Berry said he set up a system that would start one pay increase on January 1, 2011, and then another increase on July 1, 2010 that would continue through June 30, 2012, which put these steps concurrent with the State's fiscal year.

W. Shorey asked if there were any COLA's (cost of living increases) during the past four years or so and was told yes. W. Shorey stated he could not support this scale because the way it looked, employees would be losing one-fifth of their income, as the scale to the 15 years would not be keeping up with inflation. D. Berry explained that it started from the beginning, and it took into consideration the experience of the employee. D. Berry and A. Fowler expressed that they were open to W. Shorey's thoughts. W. Shorey said that he felt that employees would be losing their purchasing power as the years would go by and said he believed the employees would be very unhappy with this scale. He expressed his gratitude for all the hard work on the part of the other Commissioners, stating that he had been up during the night working on this. He felt that there should be COLA's every year. He recognized that the Chairman did not like COLA's, but he couldn't support something that he believed would be a hardship on individuals.

S. Story said these scales appealed to him because they became "known's" for up to 15 years. It also allows employees to "top out" early and move forward, but he expressed concern that somewhere down the line COLA's would have to be implemented in order to keep up with inflation.

D. Berry said that prior to this; he believed employees had been at the mercy of Commissioners and whatever COLA they were willing to give the employees, rather than a number of steps on the pay scale. He illustrated with one employee on the proposed pay scale; that they would not experience a decrease, but the plus would be that once they have topped out, bonuses would be implemented. He explained that when he was a teacher, he worked with pay scales for 36 years and was on those scales, depending on his experience, courses taken, etc. Here, Corrections Officers are going to continue in the same position until a position opens in the Corporal rank. He noted that if there was a change in the pay scales back when he was a teacher, it was reflected from the base pay all the way up through. If it was \$200.00 more, it was \$200.00 more all the way through the pay scale. D. Berry said he didn't agree with S. Story and W. Shorey's argument.

W. Shorey explained that he didn't agree with D. Berry's argument and believed the proposed pay scale, with no possibility of COLA's, would not work.

D. Berry noted that the current pay scales were locked in at a rate for longer periods of time because there were fewer pay steps. W. Shorey agreed. A. Fowler asked if this was because of certifications and was told no. S. Story recalled that there had been a study done and even prior to that, the pay scales were revamped to make all positions be "top of the bottom 1/3 of the 16 Maine counties." He noted that with the current pay scales, there is a waiting period in which people with different years of service are paid the same wage, but eventually each moves forward ahead of the others as years of service go by.

D. Berry suggested "scrapping" the proposed pay scale and giving employees a 1% raise. He felt it was very unfair for an employee to sit locked in for four years at one rate of pay. W. Shorey said if D. Berry believed that this was correct, he should vote on it. D. Berry replied that he did not believe it was good to have dissension among the Commissioners.

S. Story said he had compared Knox, Penobscot, Kennebec and Hancock Counties. When asked, S. Story said they were all a little bit different, but are similar in many ways in structure. S. Story said that he believed both Commissioner Berry and Commissioner Shorey were right in their views of the pay scales. B. Arseneau agreed that both were making valid points.

W. Shorey asked for a compromise and wondered if it might work to implement this scale this year, but believed the Commissioners would have to probably adjust with COLA's down the road. D. Berry commented that the Commissioners did not want anyone to fall behind, and was open to considering this.

W. Shorey said that whether it was a COLA or an "adjustment," down the road, he also acknowledged that with the health insurance, employees were and should be treated fairly.

D. Berry said that he agreed to adjustments being made down the road, as needed in view of the economic scene at the time.

B. Arseneau asked if she could try to sum both views, as she believed they were both trying to ultimately accomplish the same goal. She said that she believed Commissioner Berry was concerned with fixing the inequity of pay scales that had longer spaces between steps and that he had accomplished this with the new pay scales that had been developed because they incorporated more pay steps. She said that it has appeared that Commissioner Berry would like to do away with COLA's and that is where Commissioner Shorey had a concern. While the pay scales fixed one inequity, if they did not slide up occasionally, they would fall behind the cost of inflation and would become inequitable for employees. So she believed both Commissioners were trying to accomplish basically the same thing: to create a pay scale system that was fair and equitable. She asked if she understood both views correctly.

The Commissioners agreed with this summation. It was noted that the additional steps took care of inequities with years of service, and all agreed that at times the entire scale would need to be adjusted, starting with the base pay all the way through, in keeping with the economic climate at the time.

A. Fowler briefly brought up the matter of employees taking into consideration that they have a good health insurance.

S. Story commented that there were “bugs” initially with the health insurance company the County is currently with, and he had not initially been a big proponent of this plan, but now he certainly was. There was brief discussion on the current state of the health insurance plan and that there has been no increase in the operating budget for the County’s portion for the past three years. B. Arseneau noted that there would need to be an adjustment in the budget this year, as it could no longer be flat-lined.

It was noted that there were two inequities in the proposed pay scale for a couple of employees. All worked together by consulting the current pay scale, the years of service and the position, and came up with some figures.

After all recalculations were done, D. Berry recommended that bonuses be applied. He noted that .10 cents amounts to about \$200.00 a year.

S. Story observed that the Commissioners had come together on creating an equitable pay scale, with adjustments as needed in the future. If a CPI was applied to the entire scale, those with the most years of service would receive the highest adjustment in pay.

W. Shorey noted that 98% of the corporations gave their employees raises this year. S. Story said he was not surprised, but reminded everyone about the number of foreclosures, etc.

W. Shorey asked when the Corrections budget needed to be approved and sent, as he wanted to talk about the figures a little more. A. Fowler noted that it had to be sent in a day or so.

The Commissioners went back to reviewing the pay scale to try and estimate the amount for budget purposes. The Commissioners recommended that the Sheriff add the amounts accordingly in years 2012 and 13 of the budget.

Regarding part-time pay scales, S. Story liked what the Communications Director had done in creating the part-time pay as equivalent to the starting pay, without certification, of the equivalent full-time position. S. Story recommended applying the same type of pay scale system to the part-time Corrections Officers and Part-time Cooks. The Commissioners agreed with this.

M. Wadsworth asked how the Jail Administrator’s pay scale was going to be implemented. S. Story said he had plugged that salary into the 2012 and 13 budgets the same as the Corrections Officers would be: The implementation of 2012 will be on July 1, 2011 and the implementation of 2013 will start July 1, 2012. S. Story asked if these would run with the anniversary date or the fiscal year date. The Commissioners explained that they had voted to do it by fiscal year date, knowing that initially someone might get an increase early one year but it would make it much easier accounting-wise to do it this way.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to rescind the prior action taken on the Corrections pay scale during the August 24, 2010 Commissioners Court Session. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey to accept the pay scales developed today, for non-union Correction and Re-entry employees, part-time Corrections Employees, and the Jail Administrator. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to accept the 2012-13 Corrections budget. Unanimous.**

2. DEDICATION PAGE FOR 2009 ANNUAL REPORT: The Commissioners discussed the dedication page and who they wished to dedicate the report to. It was decided that they would dedicate it to both Dispatcher Arthur Butler and Head Cook Linda Paul, both of whom had retired in 2009 and were dedicated, long-time employees.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. B. Arseneau reported one date-sensitive piece of correspondence had been received from Ed Murphy, Head of the Transportation at Waldo Community Action Partners requesting a letter of recommendation from the Commissioners so that he could apply for the Community Action Professional Certification. The Commissioners agreed to send a letter of recommendation; commenting that they are very impressed with the work Mr. Murphy does on behalf of Waldo County citizens.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

****W. Shorey moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the meetings minutes from the August 10, August 17 and August 24, 2010 Waldo County Commissioners Court Sessions. Unanimous.**

B. Arseneau requested that the August 12, 2008 Commissioners Court Session minutes be amended as she had discovered that the hire of Temporary Deputy County Clerk Karen Clark had been omitted.

****D. Berry moved, W. Shore seconded to amend the August 12, 2008 Commissioners Court Session Minutes to include the hire of Karen Clark as Temporary Deputy County Clerk. Unanimous.**

S. Story asked if the Commissioners had any direction regarding his salary, or the salary of the Administrative Assistant. The Commissioners replied that they did not have any direction at this time.

NEXT COURT SESSION:

The next Commissioners Court Session is a regular court session scheduled for September 14, 2010.

****A. Fowler, W. Shorey seconded to adjourn the Commissioners Court Session at 9:51 a.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Barbara L. Arseneau
Waldo County Clerk