

**WALDO COUNTY 2018 BUDGET COMMITTEE  
ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING  
OCTOBER 27, 2017  
Maine District Courtroom  
103 Church Street, Belfast, Maine  
6:00 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Budget Committee Members Richard Desmarais, Herb Harnden, Penny Sampson, Peter Rioux, Peter Curley, Cheryl York, and Josh Gerritsen. Also present were County Commissioners William D. Shorey, Amy R. Fowler and Betty I. Johnson, and both County Clerk Barbara Arseneau and Assistant Clerk Lynn Patten to take minutes.

**Call to order:** Commissioner Shorey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., Commissioner Fowler led all in the flag salute and all present made introductions.

**Vote for 2018 Chairman:**

**\*\*P. Curley moved, P. Rioux seconded to nominate Dick Desmarais to serve as 2018 Budget Committee Chairman. Passed by all with the exception that R. Desmarais abstained.**

R. Desmarais reviewed the appropriations sheets, the revenue sheets, and reserve sheets. He suggested that the committee look at what was spent in 2016, what was allocated in 2017, what has been spent so far this year, and see how it tracks. This would give the Committee a pretty good idea as to what is needed and what is not needed. He noted that the Committee keep in mind that sometimes some of the budget line items will get spent early in the year and other lines may not be needed until the end of the year; so to please keep that in mind if large sums of monies appear to be unused, they may need to be spent in December. There will be some questions here and there, and the Committee will get to them.

R. Desmarais said he has had the opportunity to visit other town officials around the County and has come to the conclusion that each municipality handles meetings differently. He recommended that each committee member speak one at a time and he would be sure to let each person speak if they have something to say.

P. Rioux noticed in the binders 2016 expenditures were provided and asked if numbers for 2015 and 2017-to-date could be provided. The Commissioners explained that the appropriations sheets just given to them tonight show what was allocated and spent to date for 2017, what was spent in 2016, and what was spent in 2015.

There was brief discussion about the process for budget meetings, which night of the week and time would work best, and how many meetings would be required. During the next meeting, the Department Heads and outside agencies will come before the Committee. The last meeting will be the Public Meeting and after the public has had a chance to speak, the Budget Committee will go right into a vote to finalize the FY2018 Budget. It was decided that Friday nights seem to work better than Saturday mornings.

There was discussion of which parts of the budget could be altered by the Budget Committee and which parts they could not. R. Desmarais explained that personnel lines such as wages and benefits are for the Commissioners to decide, not the Committee. For the Committee's understanding as to why some salary increases are larger than the rest of the employees, the Commissioners did explain "pay step" increases that occur at certain years of longevity, and that generally there is an annual cost of living increase.

W. Shorey mentioned that Major Raymond Porter has been very active in regulating the numbers of inmates that Waldo County has sent to Two Bridges Jail. Because the inmate numbers had decreased and were a lot less than the cap of the contract between Waldo County and Two Bridges, he and the Major met with Two Bridges and explained that the amount Waldo County was paying needed to decrease or they would need to move their inmates elsewhere. The result was a contract for two years with a \$200,000.00 decrease for the first year and only a 3% increase above that for the second year. This is a great savings over what was being paid. The cap was reduced from 50 to 40 inmates. The money being saved is put into a special reserve for the Jail for emergencies that the County may be responsible for paying. Commissioner Fowler sits on several boards in Augusta that have to do with the Jails and as far as costs go, Waldo County is doing as well as anyone in the State of Maine. Major Porter has been key to these savings.

R. Desmarais asked if the County of Waldo was debt-free and the Commissioners responded that it is and has been for a number of years. It is believed that Waldo is the only county in the State that is debt-free.

W. Shorey related the history of the Waldo County Garden. Land was initially rented from the Nickersons in Swanville. Mr. Nickerson said that he was interested in selling the farm and agreed to sell it to the County for \$100,000.00. The first year the County Garden produced about 7,000 lbs. of produce. For 2017 the total produced was 139,000 lbs. Residents from the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center work on that project, learn valuable skills, and give back to the Community while transitioning back to society.

The YMCA distributed about 33,000 lbs. of the produce, being the largest distributors in the County. They set up tables three times a week so that people can come in (they don't have to be members) to pick up produce. Several other food cupboards also are large distributors of the produce.

A. Fowler mentioned that the Garden Program has been helpful in reducing recidivism.

B. Johnson added that residents in the center are using produce from the garden as well; they are learning to cook, can, and freeze the various vegetables.

W. Shorey noted that the produce is given away to food pantries, churches, soup kitchens, and any charitable organization. R. Desmarais and P. Curley mentioned that they had obtained some vegetables themselves recently from the Y.

C. York asked how people were notified of time to pick up the produce. W. Shorey explained that there are schedules for drop-offs at distribution points. He observed that it is one thing to grow 139,000 lbs. of food and is another thing to distribute that food to all the places that are serving as distribution points. A. Fowler explained where one of the distribution points was in Palermo and W. Shorey said if C. York contacted him in the spring with another distribution point, he would try to make it happen.

P. Rioux asked who was in charge of the operation. W. Shorey explained that he volunteers his time in the garden for free and therefore he can tell the Maine Coastal Regional Reentry Center residents that they are all paid the same to work out there.

W. Shorey listed the varieties of vegetables grown in the garden, noting that at times they could pick 2,500 cucumbers a day during the peak season.

The Budget Committee discussed which departments and agencies they would like to meet with and decided as follows:

**Emergency Management Agency**

**District Attorney's Office**

**Sheriff/Jail**

**Communications**

**Facilities**

**Registry of Probate**

**Registry of Deeds**

**Advertising and Promotion:**

1. **Waldo Community Action Partners**
2. **Time & Tide RC & D**
3. **Waldo County Firefighters Association.**

(Commissioner Shorey will speak for Eastern Maine Development Corporation, and Commissioner Johnson will speak for Midcoast Economic Development District and Belfast Creative Coalition since they both serve on those committees, respectively.)

There was brief discussion regarding how much time will be needed to allow for proper notice for the Public Hearing and final budget meeting.

The next budget meeting will be Friday, November 17, 2017 starting at 6:00 p.m. in the District Courtroom and at that time they will schedule the Public Hearing and final meeting.

**\*\*R. Desmarais moved, P. Curley seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:48 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by



**Waldo County Assistant Clerk**