

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
AUGUST 3, 2023**

PRESENT: Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman), Amy R. Fowler, and Betty I. Johnson. Also present was County Clerk Barbara Arseneau to take minutes.

Call to Order: Commissioner Shorey called the court session to order at 9:00 a.m.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Acting Finance Director Commissioner Amy Fowler and new Finance Director Kari Hunt reported the following:

A. Fowler introduced Kari Hunt as new Finance Director, who started Monday, July 31, 2023 and comes with an extraordinary wealth of knowledge from a municipal background. She is doing well with the County Finance Software, has taken some training in it, and will be taking more training. She's already pulled these warrants together, and printed checks. A. Fowler's plan is to take K. Hunt to First National Bank, with approval of all the Commissioners, to add her name to the County bank accounts. A. Fowler listed the accomplishments K. Hunt had achieved so far.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to put Kari Hunt as the new Finance Director on bank accounts and to add her for signatures. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to accept and file the Financial Report. Unanimous.**

K. Hunt reported the warrants as follows:

WARRANTS

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the August 3, 2023 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant with the August 3, 2023 payroll of 163,418.90 and the accounts payable of \$79,701.90 for a total \$243,120.80. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the August 3, 2023 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant with the August 3, 2023 accounts payable of \$15,600.67 and the August 3, 2023 payroll of \$38,885.97 for a total of \$54,486.64. Unanimous.**

A. Fowler reported the year-to-date expenditures are about where they should be at about 58-60% expended, and most bills have been entered to the departments they belong to.

Property Taxes Paid: The Town of Knox has paid \$110,798.08 and Unity has paid \$269,769.23 for a total of \$380,567.31 property taxes paid for 2023.

A. Fowler reported that \$4,559,510.20 has been borrowed from the \$5.5 million Tax Anticipation Note, and the current amount left to borrow is \$991,246.57.

B. Johnson requested that a Reserve report be given at the next court session.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to file the Finance Report. Unanimous.**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

IT Manager J-sun Bailey reported as follows:

1. Motorola is scheduled at the Waldo County EOC August 16, 2023 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to do an approximate 2-hour demonstration for the Mobil piece that allows officers to do more from their vehicle, and he invited the Commissioners to attend. It will be followed by a question and answer period. There has been a lot of interest from the agencies, and he felt it was best that they demonstrate it to see if it makes sense to purchase it. All law enforcement and dispatch in Waldo County are invited, and Bangor PD also asked if they could attend. Currently Waldo County and Bangor PD are the only Motorola system users in the State of Maine without this module. He's spoken with Knox and Oxford counties to get their input. The module is supposed to allow officers to enter that they have arrived on scene, which saves calls to Dispatch. Reports can also be written by "text-to-talk" in the vehicle which might minimize driving time back to a station to do reports, etc. which might save on wear-and-tear on vehicles. AVL would show where the vehicles are located and this could be a safety piece, plus it would be easier to know which vehicle is closest to a scene and could be dispatched.
2. He is setting up new employees at the Sheriff's Office, and another new employee starts Monday.
3. He still needs to obtain a camera for the new DA employee's laptop.
4. He has been setting up the new Finance Director on the computer for the past few days and has been working on the telephone invoices with her.
5. He has started researching the Stockton Springs request from the July 20, 2023 court session and will report back to the Commissioners.
6. He is still working on the business lines at the Communications Center, including who will be answering some of the business lines since the goal is to have Dispatch stop answering those. He will speak with Consolidated about the hosted VOIP at Probate and see if there is anything that can be done about that cost and the District Attorney's Office cost at the new Judicial building. A. Fowler asked J. Bailey to use the IT Technician Ray Monreal to assist him as much as possible. J. Bailey said that R. Monreal will be wiring up the new Deeds space.
7. The current phone system in the Commissioners/Probate Courthouse cannot handle any changes or additions and has already crashed when they've tried.

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT:

Human Resources Director reported as follows:

1. The Sheriff's Office has hired Aaron Santana as a full-time uncertified Patrol Officer effective August 8, at \$26.45 per hour, with a yearly accrual of 80 hours paid vacation. He is eligible for \$7,500.00 sign on bonus after academy training.
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to hire Aaron Santana as full-time uncertified Patrol Officer effective August 8, 2023 at \$26.45 per hour, with 80 hours of vacation leave annually and eligibility for the \$7,500.00 sign-on bonus after academy training. Unanimous.**

2. Brooke Hartshorn has been hired as a Certified full-time Patrol Officer effective August 7, 2023 at \$35.50 per hour, with 240 hours vacation annually, and is eligible for sign-on bonus of \$10,000.00.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to hire Brooke Hartshorn as certified full-time Patrol Officer effective August 7, 2023 at \$35.50 per hour, with 240 hours vacation annually, and eligibility for the \$10,000.00 sign-on bonus. Unanimous.**

3. Daphne Manuel has been hired as full-time uncertified Dispatcher effective July 24, 2023 at \$19.08 per hour and is eligible for the \$1,000.00 sign-on bonus. Due to unique circumstances, this hire is retroactive. There was some confusion about how new hires were to be presented and when the paperwork would be handled. D. Manuel is at training at the Academy now. She is also eligible for the \$1,000.00 sign-on bonus.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to hire Daphne Manuel as uncertified full-time Dispatcher effective July 24, 2023 at \$19.08 per hour with eligibility for the \$1,000.00 sign-on bonus. Unanimous.**

4. Devon Fairbrother has been hired as uncertified full-time Dispatcher effective July 19, 2023 at \$19.08 per hour and is eligible for the \$1,000.00 sign-on bonus. He is also training at the Academy.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve hiring Devon Fairbrother as uncertified full-time Dispatcher effective July 19, 2023 at \$19.08 per hour and eligibility for the \$1,000.00 sign-on bonus. Unanimous.** The Communications Center is now fully staffed.

5. A. McLaggan thanked A. Fowler for all her work in the Finance Office during the past several months. A. McLaggan said she felt that Susan and she herself had also done very well. A. Fowler said this was a real challenge doing the Finance work part-time and noted that all the staff in the Commissioners Office had taken on aspects of the Finance work.

6. Doors: A. McLaggan discussed the outer doors regarding when they should be locked and when they should be open. After brief discussion, all employees have keys and use the parking lot entrance, and some felt that door should remain locked. The Commissioners agreed that the parking lot side would be an employee entrance and remain locked, and the Spring Street side would be the general entrance.

7. A. McLaggan will meet with Office Assistant Susan Prisco to be sure she is up to speed since the County Clerk will be on vacation next week and the Assistant will be doing some of the Clerk's job functions during that absence. A. Fowler noted that the County Clerk had already trained the Office Assistant on agendas, minutes, road maps, etc. A. McLaggan said that now the Finance Director has been hired, it will free up the Office Assistant to be utilized more for the role she was hired and confirmed with the Commissioners that this role was to fill in for the County Clerk and to also do other lower level work so the other staff can focus on the higher level.

COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Director Michael Larrivee reported the following:

1. M. Larrivee had sent a letter to SBA Towers X, LLC tower company requesting termination of the tower agreement for the tower in Liberty. He received a letter from SBA stating that they did not accept the request at this time so it will continue until the end of the agreement, and they claim the County still owes them money. He notified them by email that the County will be forwarding this to

an attorney and has done so. The attorney believes the tower company is in violation of the contract and the County should not be paying them. The County has stopped using the tower, and the tower company took so long before responding to the County that the time had passed in which the County could have gotten out of the lease. M. Larrivee will continue to let the attorney, who specializes in towers, handle this matter.

2. The 3rd Dispatcher hire, who came from Knox County Dispatch, is now training, and the most recent trainee is now working on her own.

3. The testing planned with Knox County related to Waldo potentially handling Knox's 9-1-1 calls has had to be rescheduled. Knox's IT person went on vacation during the proposed test time, and nobody had informed M. Larrivee. He stated that he is still not comfortable with just leaving it that Knox will just unplug their phones and let calls go to Waldo, as Waldo needs to plan staffing for that, so he would like to move forward with the testing. He is concerned that not everyone at Knox is on the same page because things keep changing. The Commissioners agreed and said it appears that Knox is no closer to figuring out what they want to do long term. In two days another dispatcher is retiring. M. Larrivee said he's learned that Knox has been handling things so far because their business line hardly ever rings, whereas Waldo's business lines ring constantly. There was discussion of three business lines that Waldo Dispatch pays for and answers, including one for Belfast PD. The Commissioners suggested no longer paying for those lines. M. Larrivee explained that fire, ambulance and nursing homes still call one of the lines. The Commissioners suggested sending a notice to all those organizations stating that it would now be a different number. The Commissioners said that they do not want those lines included in the Consolidated Contract.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to remove as soon as possible the telephone phone lines that are used as business lines at the Dispatch Center. Unanimous.**

M. Larrivee recommended that one of those four lines be retained and dedicated just for alarms and nursing homes so that those calls don't get lost in the day-to-day calls, since this is commonly done in other counties. The Commissioners agreed.

There was brief discussion about the written Resolution between the City of Belfast and Waldo County and whether or not it was still in effect. To everyone's knowledge it has not been renewed or updated for a long time. M. Larrivee said he will work on that.

FACILITIES REPORT

Present was Facilities Manger Christopher Bryant.

1. Since the last court session, he has been more often utilizing the Reentry residents on the days they are not scheduled to work in the County garden. He will try to schedule a few of them to do various projects every other Tuesday.

2. A few years ago a tree had fallen on fell on the shack/generator building so he purchased some supplies and a few of the residents helped fix that up.

3. He met with EMA Director Dale Rowley yesterday regarding the renovations in the old Probate Court. D. Rowley had asked where to put a dumpster during the demolition period, and C. Bryant recommended putting a dumpster in the Facilities parking space for the time being. The Commissioners agreed.

4. He has been preparing the 2024 budget and it is going well.

5. His next scheduled training is a two-day course in December related to construction integrity. He felt this would be helpful in better understanding the County buildings. He then requested an executive session to discuss paid time off.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 9:52 a.m. for discussion of paid leave as permitted by M.R.S.A. Title 1§405 (6)(a). Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to come out of executive session at 9:58 a.m. Unanimous.** No action was taken.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 10:00 a.m. for discussion of real property as permitted by M.R.S.A. Title 1§405(6)(C). Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to come out of executive session at 10:44 a.m. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded that the Commissioners are working with the City of Belfast, pending approval, regarding the sale of the former Waldo County Superior Courthouse to the City of Belfast. Unanimous.**

CLERK'S REPORT

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported the following:

1. An email was received July 27, 2023 and forwarded to the Commissioners on July 28, 2023 from Amie Dick, Program Coordinator and Forensic Interviewer for the Midcoast Children's Advocacy Center. Due to recent changes in program funding at the Hutchinson Center where they are located, they will have to move to a new location and must be out by August 4, 2023. As yet they have not found space and are asking the County Commissioners if there is any property that could be donated or negotiated. The Commissioners thought there might be space on the second floor near the Probate Registry and instructed B. Arseneau to contact them and tell them that there are two offices upstairs that could be rented for a price that could be negotiated. If they are interested, the Facilities Manager could show them that space. The Commissioners will view the office space after the court session and determine the rent price.

2. The Commissioners received a letter from Senator Susan Collins Commissioners updating them about the status of the Penobscot Community Health Center's request for funding to construct a public health dental practice, since the Commissioners had sent a letter of support for this project. Senator Collins' letter stated that, with her support, \$1,322,000.00 has been included for this request in the fiscal year 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill recently approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

3. NDS finance software training taken this past Tuesday by Finance Director Kari Hunt and B. Arseneau was very informative and should help a lot with the upcoming budget process. B. Arseneau will block off a day next week to work on the budget templates without interruption.

4. Maine DOT sent an email on July 28, 2023 with notice that the on-demand virtual public meeting for their Carbon Reduction Strategy is now live and will remain open for comment through Monday, August 7th. There is a link for more information.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft July 28, 2023 minutes were emailed to the Commissioners for review.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to accept the minutes from the July 20, 2023 Special Commissioners Court session. Passed by two, A. Fowler abstained because she had not read them.**

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

None.

B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by *Barbara L. Arseneau* Waldo County Clerk
Barbara L. Arseneau