

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
FEBRUARY 16, 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

Finance Director Patricia Parker reported the following:

The financial packets are now revised a little to make them easier. She explained how the reserves will look now.

The County Checkbook balance is \$676,666.70 and the Jail Checkbook balance is \$120,498.81. \$150,000.00 has been borrowed from the TAN for the Jail. That account will now be a little under \$10,000.00. She believed no more should be borrowed on the County side until the first of April.

Copies of the State Valuations and proposed 2023 Waldo County Tax & Jail Commitment for each town were submitted to the Commissioners.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to sign the 2023 Waldo County Tax & Jail Tax Commitments. Unanimous.**

County Appropriations/Revenue:

12% of the County 2023 budget has been expended. 0% of the County revenue has been received.

Corrections Appropriations/Revenue:

11% of the Corrections 2023 budget has been expended. 0% of the Corrections revenue has been received.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to file the Financial Report. Unanimous.**

WARRANTS

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the February 16, 2023 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant including payroll in the amount of \$340,385.39. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the February 16, 2023 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant including payroll in the amount of \$340,385.39. Unanimous.**

E. Higgins said she had a few questions for the Finance Director and Commissioner Shorey asked her to hold them until after Public Comment.

NEW HIRES

Present were Chief Deputy Matthew Curtis and Lt. Cody Laite.

1. Part-time Patrol Officer Kevin Littlefield resigned effective February 3, 2023. Noted by the Commissioners. (See formal vote in the Human Resources Report.)
2. Dennis Townsend has been selected to fill one of the Deputy slots effective February 20, 2023. He is 15-year law enforcement veteran, will be hired at the 15-year rate of \$31.48 per hour, will receive 200 hours of vacation per year, and is eligible for the \$15,000.00 sign-on bonus; the first half paid after successfully completing field training, and the second half paid after completion of one year of employment with a positive performance evaluation.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to hire Dennis Townsend as Patrol Deputy effective February 20, 2023 at the 15-year pay step of \$31.48 per hour and eligibility for the \$15,000.00 sign-on bonus. Unanimous.**
3. Detective Chad Foley has been selected to fill the vacant Patrol Sergeant position effective retroactive to February 12, 2023 at \$35.36 per hour and will be assuming those duties with the next payroll cycle.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to promote Detective Chad Foley to the position of Sergeant effective February 12, 2023 at \$35.36 per hour. Unanimous.**
4. Deputy Frank Pellerin has been selected to fill a vacant Detective position effective February 3, 2023 at \$31.48 per hour.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to promote Deputy Frank Pellerin to Detective effective February 3, 2023 at \$31.48 per hour. Unanimous.**
5. Deputy Joshua Staples has been selected to fill a vacant Detective position effective March 2, 2023. (See more details in Human Resources Report.)
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to promote Deputy Joshua Staples to Detective effective March 2, 2023. Unanimous.**

ARPA PROJECTS UPDATE

EMA Director Dale Rowley reported the following:

1. Haley Ward will be brought on board with architect Matt Carter to do all the paperwork to move the project through the fire marshal's process. After that, there will be enough drawings to do the work. They have the plans and have also requested the digital plans for the public safety building, and will also help with permitting for ADA, etc. and ideas for layout.
2. At the Swanville site, the warehouse roof is being sheathed. They will still need to piggyback trusses through the remainder of the winter.
3. The EMA building is experiencing some difficulties with the drywall, as AKS' schedule has not permitted them to come to the site. Once painted, tongue and groove walls will be installed. Coastal Concrete Flooring is doing a slightly different composite that is supposedly more impact resistant. It will be about 4 to 5 weeks out for the flooring. He provided other estimates for timing and work to be done. At this point, it is still under budget. A retention/fire pond must be dug, and other filtration pits as part of the storm water system. He's received a proposal from Wellman Paving, so hopefully it will be paved in late June. He hopes the entire project will be mostly done by July. At this point, it is still under budget even factoring in those projects. He described it as "2/3rd committed, but half spent."

4. It appears the renovation projects for the Registry of Deeds are coming in at or under budget at this point.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Present were Freedom Selectman Elaine Higgins, Palermo Selectman Bob Kurek, Michael “Mickey” Sirota, and Sarah Crosby, who are also members of the Broadband Committee. B. Kurek explained that the \$20,000.00 provided by the County was used to form the Waldo Broadband Organization which will bring broadband to the 5-town area of Freedom, Liberty, Montville, Palermo and Searsmont as a non-profit. The grant they submitted was conditionally approved for \$11.2 million. The financial commitment was \$4.6 million because the project is a little over \$15,000,000.00 and it is anticipated to finish construction at the end of 2023. They scored very high on the grant criteria. Yesterday the conditional offer was accepted but the Maine Connectivity Authority decided not to recommend them going forward with the first cohort, because of lack of commitment for the \$4.6 million. He explained that in more detail, stating that they are well positioned for the second cohort and are taking actions with Maine Connectivity Authority with Financial Authority of Maine and Legislators. Representative Ziegler is assisting with language that will help move those bonds, and Maine Connectivity is trying to find a funding mechanism that they can access. Without a history of a steady revenue stream, nobody will fund the bonds. Hopefully the issue will be resolved before the next round in June. M. Sirota said they are the only broadband corporation recognized by Maine Connectivity Authority. Both he and S. Crosby were brought on due to their fundraising experience. They did the mapping with the funds provided by the Commissioners. Nearly 6000 people will benefit from the broadband. They did a feasibility study and that allowed them to find someone to build it. Sarah Crosby said that the collaboration and technical expertise were incredible. They also had J-sun Bailey assisting them. It allowed them to pick an option other than Consolidated or any other one provided. Surveys were sent and results showed that 74% of the 600 responses are using internet for businesses. 60% are using it for education. Decent internet is necessary for applying for jobs, for most types of information that used to be available by paper, and even for communicating with doctors. Investing in this is vital for people to stay in these times. They are filing as a 501-C3 corporation. People will be able to select what plan they want based on income and need and with more than one provider. The Commissioners commended the Corporation for their hard work and want to continue to hear from the Corporation. The Commissioners are developing a new form for people to complete and submit if they are requesting to be part of the annual County budget The Commissioners have spoken to others about what this group is doing and want to continue helping as they are able. E. Higgins said her question to the Finance Director was if there are additional ARPA funds available and the Commissioners replied that there are not.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

IT Director J-sun Bailey reported to the Commissioners.

1. Ray Monreal has been selected for the new part-time IT Technician position, effective February 27, 2023 at \$25.00 per hour starting at 20 hours per week. His role was briefly discussed. He is still doing work out at the EMA as part of his own business that he runs.

****A. Fowler moved, W. Shorey seconded to hire Ray Monreal as part-time IT Technician effective February 27, 2023 at \$25.00 per hour for 20 hours per week. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

H.R. Director Annette McLaggan reported additional information regarding the promotions and new hires.

1. Regarding hiring Ray Monreal as IT Technician, he also has his own business and will continue doing that part-time. This has been discussed so that there is a line of delineation and the expectations when he is working for the County.
2. Deputy Joshua Staples is due a 5-year step pay of \$28.35 per hour effective February 2, 2023 at \$28.35. A. Fowler stated that he is being promoted to Detective and wondered how this factored in. A. McLaggan said she had not been notified that he was being promoted, and that it could impact his new rate of pay and would research that. She was given a copy of the promotion that was submitted by the Chief Deputy, reviewed it, and said this pay has been adjusted accordingly. He will be promoted March 2, 2023.
3. Dispatcher Paul Haskell has reached 15 years, and his vacation accruals will be adjusted based on his longevity.
4. Part-time Deputy Kevin Littlefield resigned February 3, 2023.
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to accept the resignation of Kevin Littlefield.**

The Commissioners apologized that A. McLaggan was not aware of some of the promotions and hires. A. McLaggan said the Chief Deputy met with her briefly earlier this morning and said they would discuss how new hires, promotions, etc. would be handled with Human Resources in the future for reporting to the Commissioners.

5. Compliments of the wellness program, she went around to all the departments with fruit baskets. She was pleased to meet with the department heads and make herself available to them and is working on assisting with recruiting and advertising for the Facilities Manager position that will soon be vacant after the current Manager retires as well as the vacant Deeds Clerk position. Advertising will be done internally and externally at the same time.
6. Commissioner Johnson has requested job descriptions and evaluations for Department Heads. She wanted to know what had been done to date. Some job descriptions are outdated. B. Johnson said that if they are due for evaluations, she'll speak with the other two Commissioners and figure out how to go about that.

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported correspondence as follows:

1. Tax Abatement Hearing #380: There will be new notices sent out for #380 that was going to be heard today and was moved to April 20, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the request of the petitioner. This will be the same day as the Spirit of America, so she will set the agenda up to accommodate both.
2. Spirit of America Ceremony certificates for the longest serving elected governing official for each Town are nearly complete and will be sent out in time to be presented at Town Meetings.

3. New Office Assistant Susan Prisco is doing very well, picking things up quickly, and all are very grateful to have her there to help. The Commissioners and B. Arseneau briefly discussed what tasks the Office Assistant might be able to take on for the County Clerk.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. Commissioner Shorey has asked B. Arseneau to come up with a form for organizations who are asking for funds from the County. She found one from Aroostook County that could serve as a template and was not too elaborate. Once it is modified for Waldo County, it will be brought before the other two Commissioners.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None finished at this time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to go into executive session at 10:16 a.m. for discussion of non-public Information as permitted by MRSA Title 1, 406, F. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to come out of executive session at 12:53 p.m. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to increase the salary for Human Resources/Payroll Director Annette McLaggan by \$5,000.00 immediately. Unanimous.**

Commissioner Shorey asked for another executive session to be scheduled on the March 2, 2023.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn the court session at 12:55 p.m. Unanimous.**

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