

WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
MARCH 16, 2023
(For more detailed information, see recording on waldocountyme.gov)

PRESENT: Commissioners William D. Shorey (Chairman), and Betty I. Johnson (Amy R. Fowler was absent due to a family emergency). Also present was Freedom Selectman Elaine Higgins, and 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

Human Resources Director Annette McLaggan reported the following on behalf of Acting Finance Director Commissioner Amy Fowler:

Payroll for MCRRC (Jail) was paid in the amount of \$45,845.20.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to authorize payment of the MCRRC payroll in the amount of \$45,845.20. Unanimous.**

Payroll for the County General Account was paid in the amount of \$185,289.28.

****W. Shorey moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the County payroll in the amount of \$185,289.28. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to pay the grand total of payroll in the amount of \$231,134.48. Unanimous.**

A. McLaggan commended Commissioner Fowler for doing an excellent job keeping the County current, taking care of the online banking, and is up to date with transferring funds to various accounts. They met with the bank and learned how to move around within those accounts. Health insurance and benefits, vendors, and payroll are being paid.

A. McLaggan contacted the bank for a rough total of what is in the County Accounts and was told it is around \$6,000,000.00 in total funds available.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to file the finance report. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

HR Director Annette McLaggan reported that she has been doing the following:

1. Meeting with vendors, including Jennifer McCurry of iSolved who assists with employee benefits. They are moving forward with additional trainings.
2. Processed the \$4,000.00 sign-on bonus for David Kunic.
3. Working with Facilities Director for that upcoming position. About 15 applications have been received, 5 of which are viable.
4. The P/T Deeds Clerk position applications are coming in, and candidates have been invited for interviews.

4.. The Finance Director position is still being posted and 5 applications have been received. 3 seem very viable.

5. B. Johnson commented that the staff were a great team – everyone was willing to stay late, work on things they normally don't, and Commissioner Fowler has done an excellent job. A. McLaggan agreed that the team is working extremely well together, and other departments have been very supportive, as well.

6. A. McLaggan is pulling together a committee of employees from each department to serve as a committee to meet with her and the payroll company to see if some improvements can be made to payroll functions. She will attend the Safety/Department Head Meeting next week.

SWANVILLE PROJECT UPDATE

1. The Governor signed the bill clarifying the correct boundary for Waldo and Knox counties. This has now been resolved.

2. He met with architect from Haley Ward who presented an agreement for the floor plan for both Deeds and District Attorney's Offices and will assist up to the point of obtaining permits from the Fire Marshal's Office. After that they will be available as needed and paid by the hour. The total for this is \$27,000.00, with a \$5,000.00 retainer up front, which is very reasonable. It will help with the timeliness of this, as it would take D. Rowley a long time to do it himself. Funds available for the architectural piece is about \$217,000.00, so there should be funding leftover if all goes well. The Commissioners agreed with this quote.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to sign the architectural/engineering agreement with Haley Ward for \$27,000.00 with the \$5,000.00 retainer as presented. Unanimous.**

3. D. Rowley reported that so far things with the Swanville project are also under budget. Both the warehouse and EMA buildings are being constructed as materials have become available. There is still not a transformer from CMP, no internet, and no phone. He reported the progress so far, and what has arrived for parts and materials, and he hopes that they may be able to move in May.

5. He anticipates being about \$200,000.00 under budget and said he would like to come up with a budget for furniture, shelving, and other things to outfit the building. By not hiring an outside general contractor, with current high bids because companies don't need the work, he believes the County has saved \$1,000,000.00.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to approve the Architectural/Engineering Agreement with Haley Ward for \$27,000.00 with the \$5,000.00 retainer. Unanimous.**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Reporting was IT Director J-sun Bailey and IT Technician Ray Monreil was also present.

1. New Website Quotes: He received about nine (9) quotes. He's still reviewing websites statewide and nationwide to see what other government agencies are using and is leaning toward a company called Revize which is not the best system out there but is not the least expensive. It would require signing up for 5 years at \$14,000.00. Another company is Civic Plus at about \$36,000.00 for a

4-year plan. These kinds of companies make it possible to pay taxes online and vehicle registrations and other services the County doesn't need. He will send the Commissioners some information on this so they can review and discuss it further with them in the near future.

2. Phone System Update: Several vendors have been contacted. He was looking at a cloud system, but because business lines are recorded for 9-1-1 and the Sheriff's business lines, they will have eventually to also record texts and videos to 9-1-1 and this would create a double paying situation. He then revisited an inhouse phone system with the ability to record and thinks that's the most economical solution. He received a quote for that at about \$130,000.00 for a one-time payment that includes 5-year warranty on phones, etc., and the warranty could be extended out after that. He thought they could use Consolidated for all the service and has found another vendor that they could merge all the systems, including internet, together. He'll create a sheet of all the information for the Commissioners.

3. He is meeting with a vendor to look at a different model of law enforcement laptop computers for the patrol vehicles. He will apply for the Congressional Directed Spending fund in hopes that it will pass and cover this cost, including necessary upgrades of docking stations, etc. He has a vendor coming in tomorrow. He listed the estimated costs for laptops, docking stations, etc. He's concerned that staff can type reports in their vehicles in an ergonomic way, and if there is a voice-to-type piece, this would be a good use of their time in the car. There are 18 vehicles. There is a possibility that e-ticketing may be necessary as an option. He would ask for what is hoped for and see what may be awarded.

4. IT Technician Ray Monreil is learning and getting up to speed.

5. A phone has been provided for the HR Director.

6. The D.A.'s staff are on the AT & T cell phones as a trial.

7. He is attending the Motorola Conference in Florida the first week of April.

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported correspondence as follows:

1. The staff are trying to triage needs in the office.

2. As is typical for this time of year, there have been a number of phone calls regarding spring road issues.

3. She has been doing some extensive road research for a gentleman who has had difficulty finding a road.

4. On April 20, 2023 the Commissioners have a tax abatement appeal hearing. Another tax abatement application has also been filed and she will let the Commissioners know if it needs to come before them.

5. The Spirit of America ceremony is also scheduled for April 20, 2023. Office Assistant Susan Prisco was able to get the certificates sent out to each of the towns for the longest serving municipal official.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

None at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT

E. Higgins thanked the Commissioners for signing the Broadband Letter of Support for grant funds. The consortium will also be applying for Congressional District Spending grants from Senator Collins, Senator King, and Representative Golden. They will be looking for letters of endorsement for some smaller grants that may be available. As a 501-C they may be able to receive donations because they can write them off their taxes, which would be very helpful because they can't get a grant because they don't have any funding and they can't get any funding because they can't apply for grants. B. Johnson briefly discussed Lincolnville's experience with fiber optic, and the landline requirement.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. W. Shorey said he spoke with Commissioner Fowler, and they believe the staffing situation in the Finance Office should continue as it is until a permanent replacement can be hired. B. Johnson said she thought that it would be a good idea to have a P/T Assistant for the Finance Director. She didn't feel one of the Commissioners should have to be in the office all the time. W. Shorey said that feedback from A. Fowler has been that things are working out well with the current part-time person. Temporarily the Office Assistant has been working 4 and sometimes 5 days a week when she had planned on only working 3 days. W. Shorey said the feedback was that they think it is alright the way it is currently. They agreed to keep monitoring things and if they need to discuss further, they will.

2. Signing Checks: B. Johnson asked if she had been included as a signer, as she believed it had been voted on. A. McLaggan joined the discussion and said her understanding is that B. Johnson has not been added yet, but it could be researched further. There was discussion of how many people should be able to sign checks, and was briefly discussed that with Commissioner Fowler's permission, her signature stamp might be used for check payments and that it would be legal. A. McLaggan stated that currently she and B. Arseneau only have viewing rights to the accounts, but cannot do anything with them, and the bank has been willing to accept verbal approval from Commissioner Fowler for certain functions. When asked if using Commissioner Fowler's stamp was a legal signature, A. McLaggan stepped out of the session to contact the bank about this matter and came back to report that using a signature stamp is permissible as long as the signer has approved its use. The bank requested that they be provided a copy of the signature being stamped so that they have it on file. Commissioner Johnson can also be set up to sign. The importance of good internal controls, even while short-staffed, was discussed.

3. B. Johnson thanked B. Arseneau for sending the jail figures to Aroostook County Commissioner Norman Fournier the previous week.

****B. Johnson moved, W. Shorey seconded to adjourn at 10:16 a.m. Unanimous.**

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