

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
MARCH 25, 2024**

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

Call to Order: Commissioner Shorey called the court session to order at 10:01 a.m.

FACILITIES REPORT

Facilities Manager Chris Bryant reported:

1. Old Jail Archive Roof: Horch Roofing will be able to shingle the roof on the Old Jail Archive from April 22 through May 3, 2024. He's obtaining a work permit from the City.
2. The Superior Courthouse Archive Move: All but about 40 of the Archive boxes have been moved out to the EMA building. He and the Facilities Technician will continue with that until it's finished and is also preparing to assist the D.A.'s Office move their boxes out to that building.
3. The U. of M. Cooperative building has one bad electrical outlet. Facilities Technician R. Melanson knows how to do that type of work, so C. Bryant asked if the Commissioners would allow him to take care of that. The Commissioners agreed.
4. Sunday he and the Facilities Technician cleared most of the snow and ice from the storm and have done more removal today. They have heavily salted the icy walkways at the Former Superior Courthouse. To his knowledge, the storm caused no damage to any of the buildings.

UPDATE ON DA'S MOVE

Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey reported:

1. L. Kragh has been an excellent help with the older records. She has gone through and purged over 100 boxes of what was called "District Court" records as they would be easier for her to recognize with her job experience, work with, doesn't require much training, and more can be accomplished in shorter time whereas scanning three boxes takes an entire day. "Superior Court" records will now be gone through. All the staff are working on this project as they are able. So far, L. Kragh has not been available for the full 28 hours per week, so he asked if the limit was based on hours or weeks. The Commissioners said they'd re-evaluate this at 6 weeks.

The plan is to take the oldest D.A. records to the EMA building. The Facilities Manager and Technician helped move a few shelves into the rented space at the new Judicial building to house about 100 boxes to be accessed and scanned as time permits.

A hired company is breaking down the rolling file cabinet right now to move it to the new file room. He asked the contractors to prime the walls in advance.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

IT Director J-sun Bailey reported:

1. He is working on D.A. Office move. Consolidated Communications will be disconnecting and moving phone lines and moving one internet line the first of the month. The second one will be

permanently disconnected because one already exists in the Public Safety building, so there will be cost savings there.

3. Consolidated Communications will conduct a site visit to make the line can come to this building and the new fiber line can be installed. The new cost rate is in place and should be \$20.00 less per line.

4. All but the Communications Center building have a fire alarm that dials out if it goes off. Each system was hardcoded to dial 9 to call out, and this had to be changed. He wasn't allowed to do it himself, so it was a \$150.00 fee to send someone at \$350.00 per hour with a 3-hour minimum. Hopefully the line savings will cover this expense relatively soon.

5. The Deeds phone lines are all working.

7. The new D.A.'s space is being rewired by Ray Monreal. As soon as the painting is done, the face plates can be installed.

8. A recycling company is scheduled to pick up the old printers/copiers at the former Deeds Office.

CORRESPONDENCE

County Clerk B. Arseneau reported that Senator Susan Collins sent an update about the Penobscot Community Health Center's request for federal funding to construct a public health dental practice. Senator Collins requested \$1,322.00 be included for this project in the fiscal year 2024 Labor, Health and Human Service, and Education Appropriations bill. It has passed the Senate and House of Representatives and is headed to the President to be signed into law. The Commissioners were pleased to hear this news.

APPROVED MINUTES

B. Arseneau said Office Assistant Susan Prisco had finished some older sets of Commissioners Court Session minutes and asked if the Commissioners had reviewed those. The Commissioners said they didn't recall receiving them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Monica Myles, Public Affairs Specialist with the U.S. Small Business Administration informed the Commissioners that businesses can apply for low interest rate economic injury disaster loans related to the disaster that was declared in a neighboring county during the December 17 to 21, 2023 storms and flooding. These loans are available to businesses and non-profits who believe they were adversely impacted by that disaster which may have effected Waldo's businesses such as road closures, supplier holdups, etc. These loans are geared toward ordinary and customary costs of business to keep the business functioning, not to repair buildings or vehicles, inventory, etc. The interest rate is as low as 4% for a business, and 3.25% for non-profit organizations. No interest is accrued during the first year of the loan, and first payment is not due until after the first year the funds were received by the business. She explained process, the loan term, and said the deadline to apply is October 30, 2024. Those who need assistance may go to lending.sba.gov or may call the S.B.A. at 1-800-659-2955. People who are hearing/speech impaired may call 711 for assistance.

Waldo County was named as a primary disaster zone during the January 9 through 13, 2024 storm, so people there will be able to apply for disaster funding. Homeowners and business owners who have real estate issues can also apply for this. She reviewed fund amount limits and interest rates. These provisions do not require waiting for FEMA. There is delay in payment for one year, etc. to help people and businesses get back on their feet.

The Commissioners expressed their gratitude for the information and offered to put this information on the County's web site.

2. Jonathan Beal, a Belfast resident, stated he was here as a member of the public to discuss hazardous waste control. Durin a recent City of Belfast Council meeting, the Waste Transfer Director received authorization to do a public collection of hazardous waste and there was question of how to charge non-Belfast residents who use the facilities for dumping. He wondered if a County-wide approach could be considered as a way to handle it. Also present was Finance Director Kari Hunt who, speaking from her previous experience of working for municipal office, said Council of Governments such as KVCOG used to offer hazardous waste collection that towns would pay for, and an individual could use this service. The town would hire someone for a day to check off. J. Beal said Belfast hires a private contractor for \$1,800.00 to come for four hours, and if that contractor collects any waste, they have to pay an additional \$31.50 per gallon, or the same for 20 lbs. of waste. This is expensive and is only once a year. The Commissioners said they could look into this, speak with other counties similar to Waldo to see what they are doing, and have further discussion about this.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. None.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 10:49 a.m. for discussion of non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(F). Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to come out of executive session at 12:00 p.m. Unanimous.**

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS REPORT

EMA Director Dale Rowley reported:

1. District Attorney's Office Space Renovation: This project will not be done by the end of March. He described the schedule of work and what was left to be done. As some of the work if finished, it may be possible to move some of the D.A.'s Office equipment in there. He recommended notifying the City of Belfast that there would be a delay of at least two weeks and possibly into the end of April. The Commissioners noted that the City had already asked if they could move one of its departments into the Superior Courthouse space, which has been allowed, so this delay shouldn't present a problem. They directed B. Arseneau to call the City Manager and work this out so that the D.A.'s Office could remain until their new office space is ready, likely around April 15, 2024 at the earliest. The Commissioners noted that the County had to apply for permits from the City for these project and couldn't move any faster.

2. There is some Homeland Security funding that won't be used for what was originally intended, so D. Rowley is doing modifications. They've done one for various training guns and equipment, and there is some other training equipment that they need. This is "part two" of training equipment, and he suggested funding it from the Detail reserve account because the LEPC account was low. It would take about 4 to 6 weeks to be reimbursed by Homeland Security and the State.

3. The County EOC was activated yesterday for the coastal storm. Belfast, Lincolnville, Northport, Searsport, and Stockton were the hardest hit towns. About 14,000 people were out of power, and 22 roads were closed yesterday. CMP coordinated it very well and the last road was opened today, with only about 2500 out of power now. CMP logged into the D4H tool that EMA uses and were able to figure out the roads with this tool.

FINANCE REPORT

Finance Director Kari Hunt submitted the monthly County and Jail appropriations reports, reserve accounts report, and a detailed Garden Report. The health plan as of last week had another \$43,000.00 taken out and brought the account down to \$201,000.00. If funds hadn't been transferred, the account would be down to \$60,000.00. Meritain has reimbursed \$18,000.00 and the County had \$700.00 as well, but even without those funds, it would be about \$38,000.00. It's important to transfer the funds, and she's worried about things going forward.

County Checking Account balance is \$103,458.46 balance, 24% of the County budget has been spent and could be 25%.

Jail Checking Account balance is \$180,187.29, 23% of the Jail budget has been spent, and could be 25%.

The County received \$17,770.79 in OPIOID reimbursement funds and will be transferred to the OPIOID account.

The Knox County 911 reimbursement for February has been received.

MCCA Risk Pool's financial statements for December 2022 and 2021 have been received.

Lt. Cody Laite requested funds in the amount of \$4,000.00 to purchase some items. She is asking permission to issue a check so he can purchase those items.

****B. Johnson, A. Fowler to approve a check written for \$4,000.00 for Cody Laite to use.**

Unanimous.

2024 MILEAGE RATE: A few of the Union contracts and the employee handbook are specific that the County mileage reimbursement rate follows the current IRS rate, and the County cannot apply last year's rate. A. Fowler said that for the record she disagreed in view of how tight money is. The Commissioners asked for this policy to be amended in the future. For now, the current reimbursed rate will change from .655 cents per mile to the IRS rate of .67cents per mile.

K. Hunt asked for clarification of which funds would pay the temporary P/T employee scanning records for the D.A.'s Office: The Commissioners confirmed it is coming from reserve account 0223.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to reaffirm that funds from 0223 will pay for the P/T employee at the District Attorney's Office. Unanimous.**

TRAVEL POLICY: As requested by the Commissioners, Kari Hunt and Annette McLaggan drafted a travel policy, which was given to the Commissioners to review. K. Hunt asked if the department heads should review it before it is accepted. The Commissioners declined and said to move it forward.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded for the Travel Policy to go into effect April 1, 2024.**
Discussion: A. McLaggan asked if this will apply to anyone who has already submitted their invoicing to request to travel. The Commissioners said yes but understood that travel already booked couldn't be changed. A. McLaggan said there is a Department Head meeting this Thursday so she and K. Hunt will discuss it with the Department Heads. **Unanimous.**

A. McLaggan asked if the Commissioners wanted the Employee Handbook amended now regarding the new wording for the milage rate. The Commissioners requested that mileage wording be the next policy worked on, but to add the Travel Policy to the Employee Handbook now.

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

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the March 21, 2024 MCRRC/Corrections counts Payable in the amount of \$187,590.81 and the March 21, 2024 payroll in the amount of \$46,674.19 for a total warrant of \$234,265.00. Unanimous.**

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the March 21, 2024 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve accounts payable in the amount of \$312,475.36 and the March 21, 2024 payroll in the amount of \$171,925.66 for a total of \$484,401.02. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Human Resources Director Annette McLaggan said she had no report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to go into executive session at 12:37 p.m. for discussion of non-public information as permitted by MRSA Title 1§405(6)(F). Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to come out of executive session at 1:05 p.m. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to sign the resolve from BernsteinShur. Unanimous.**

Prosecutorial Assistant Eric Harvey returned to say he heard the new DA's Office won't be ready until later. He called Fox and Ginn and they can only move the D.A.'s Office April 15-17th. The Commissioners approved.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn at 1:07 p.m. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted by Barbara L. Arseneau Waldo County Clerk

Barbara L. Arseneau