

**WALDO COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT SESSION
NOVEMBER 17, 2022**

PRESENT: Commissioners Amy R. Fowler (Chairman), William D. Shorey, and Betty I. Johnson. Also present were Freedom Selectperson 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:

Present was Finance Director Patricia Parker, who reported the following:

The County Checkbook balance is \$2,725,739.55, and the Jail Checkbook balance is \$1,242,809.77.

TAX ANTICIPATION NOTE:

The total Tax Anticipation Note is \$5,500,000.00. \$2,620,000.00 has been borrowed; \$1,775,000.00 by the County and \$845,000.00 by Corrections. As of yesterday, \$25,778.95 in interest is owed. P. Parker plans on paying the TAN by the end of this week. Six towns have not paid property taxes yet, so she will be sending reminder letters next week. 2023 TAN bid requests have been sent out to Camden National, First National, Key Bank, and Bangor Savings.

2020 Audit: T. Parker submitted the audit report for 2020 that were just received from Brantner, Thibodeau & Associates and requested permission to send copies to the banks that are submitting Tax Anticipation Note bids for 2023. There was brief discussion regarding potential interest rates.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler to authorize sharing the most recent audit to the banks for the TAN bids. Unanimous.**

County Appropriations/Revenue:

79% of the County 2022 budget has been expended and could be 92%. 120.18% of the County revenue has been received at this time.

Corrections Appropriations/Revenue:

75% of the Corrections 2022 budget has been expended and could be 92%. 139.76% of the Corrections revenue has been received at that time.

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

WARRANTS

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to authorize payment of the November 17, 2022 General Fund Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant and November 10, 2022 payroll in the amount of \$194,310.66. Unanimous.**

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to authorize payment of the November 17, 2022 MCRRC (Corrections) Accounts Payable and Reserve warrant and November 10, 2022 payroll in the amount of \$57,021.36. Unanimous.**

T. Parker expressed appreciation to the Commissioners and all the employees as they have been working hard to assist her.

SHERIFF'S REPORT:

Lieutenant Matthew Curtis was present to report the following:

1. On behalf of the Sheriff's Office, M. Curtis expressed gratitude to the Commissioners for the gift cards that were issued to employees and noted that they were well received.
2. Hiring Processes: The Sheriff's election has been settled with Jason Trundy starting his first term as High Sheriff in 2023. They have not heard back on the grant they applied for to assist with the two positions that were submitted as partially funded in the 2023 budget. He wished to start moving on the hiring process, as the hiring market is competitive right now. A few people have expressed some interest and he would like to reach out to them. The total grant reimbursement, if received, would be \$80,233.00 with the remainder being paid from the County budget.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded for the Sheriff's Office to move forward with the search to fill the positions discussed, with funds from the current budget, and if the grant funds are received, they can be used and if not, funds will be allocated from elsewhere. Unanimous.**

HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

Human Resources Director KelLee Gray reported the following.

1. A letter was received from Register of Deeds Stacy grant offering the open full-time Clerk position to Dispatcher Elena Donovan effective November 26th for 35 hours per week at the Class V, 12-year step due to longevity for \$22.06 per hour.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to approve hiring Elena Donovan as presented. Unanimous.**
2. K. Gray is working to automate the MainePERS monthly information data that is being manually entered and paid with an ACH transfer. She is working with Kathy Saucier to create a computerized download so it will be handled less with fewer human errors. It should be running by December 15th.
2. K. Gray and Facilities Manager Keith Nealley (also present) introduced new Facilities Technician Chris Bryant, who shared some of his work background.
****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson to approve hiring Chris Bryant as Facilities Technician at \$20.00 per hour with 6 months probationary period effective November 21, 2022. Unanimous.**
4. The Facilities pay scale has been updated to match the new pay rates, effective retroactive to November 1, 2022. It matches the other pay scales that the County had, and she corrected a few formula errors. After brief discussion the Commissioners voted as follows:
****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to approve the Facilities Management updated pay scales for 2022. Unanimous.**

FACILITIES REPORT

Facilities Manager Keith Nealley presented the following:

1. K. Nealley gave credit to A. Fowler because two trees needed to be removed, and she had reminded him to speak with the City of Belfast about piggybacking on their scheduled tree removal.

The original price for the County would have been \$5,000.00, but because they asked for it to be done the same time the City of Belfast was having a tree removed, the arborist reduced it to \$2,800.00 and then gave \$300.00 for the ash logs, so the bill was only \$2,500.00, which was a great deal. The stumps will be ground down and new trees should be planted in the spring.

2. Before K. Trussell left, there was an inquiry from Central Maine Power (CMP) regarding a rebate program being offered for the three commercial accounts that include the Communications Center, the Reentry Center, and the Public Safety Building. The total credit from CMP will be about \$7,000.00 total for those three accounts. He reported that the PUC just approved a 49% increase for CMP for 2023, which is substantial.
3. K. Nealley is still waiting for quotes for the solar projects at the Public Safety building. It may be possible to discuss mounting solar panels at the EMA/Garden buildings in Swanville, as well. W. Shorey said he spoke with EMA Director Dale Rowley recently and D. Rowley believes it can be funded from the funds that that may be left over from the renovation of the 39A Spring Street office. K. Nealley said Revision Energy is booked up through 2023 for installation but they will keep the County on the list since it's in town, in case one of their other jobs falls through. They encouraged K. Nealley to secure a contract as soon as possible with CMP to buy back from the County. He guessed that if they are charging customers more, they may be paying more for credits. Once he has an estimate, he will email to the Commissioners.
4. Extension Office: The staff has moved back into the building and are enjoying their downstairs renovation. There are still a few projects to do at that building before the end of the year including a few exterior doors and a gutter system. He will be well within his budget.
5. W. Shorey asked about heating costs. K. Nealley said the County is locked in at \$2.00 per gallon for propane until May 2023. No company will commit on heating oil at this time. There are 4000 gallons in the former Superior Courthouse oil tank, and he hopes to get through the bulk of the winter with that. Oil and electric will be extremely high this year. A. Fowler said K-1 is \$7.69 per gallon, and most do a 100-gallon minimum. The Commissioners said they don't know how people will manage. W. Shorey said that prices are going up because solar is taking part of the income the electrical companies used to make, so they are trying to make up for that.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Present was Freedom Selectperson Elaine Higgins, who reported that the Waldo Broadband Corporation is still moving forward. They held a gathering in Liberty last week, it was nice to meet with people socially, and they will be moving forward with dissolving the South Western Waldo County Broadband Coalition within the next few months, after funding is moved. KVCOG is their financial sponsor. It has moved unbelievably fast, all the people are volunteers, none are paid at this point, and are doing a phenomenal job.

CORRESPONDENCE & APPROVAL OF MINUTES

County Clerk Barbara Arseneau reported:

1. Opioid Settlement Update: The attorney contacted all the counties and asked how they would like to receive the remaining settlement payments. Commissioner Shorey has opted for the four equal installments that they recommended.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Neither Commissioner Fowler or Johnson had read the draft minutes from the October 6, 2022 and October 20, 2022 Commissioners Court Sessions, and Commissioner Shorey had read them. The Commissioners approved the minutes without objection.

MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

1. W. Shorey asked for a vote on an employment contract with Information Technology Director J-sun Bailey.

****A. Fowler moved, B. Johnson seconded to sign the one-year contract for employment with a significant increase in salary for IT Director J-sun Bailey. Unanimous.** W. Shorey said he thought he had negotiated a fair salary the previous week, but when more was requested, they did some research and found out that most counties have three (3) IT people. J. Bailey is also tied up with Zoom meetings a great deal, setting them up, etc. They acknowledged he is spread thin, and an employee needs to be hired to assist him. They realized the job has developed and is more involved.

2. A. Fowler has been going over ARPA fund spending with new Finance Director Trish Parker.

3. A. Fowler reported that a settlement, which cannot be discussed at this point, is being worked on by legal counsel.

4. A. Fowler noted that the Communications Center has lost another dispatcher. There are sign-on bonuses for law enforcement, and perhaps this should be done with Communications hires, as well. A. Fowler said recruitment bonuses might be offered if an employee recommends another person who is hired. B. Johnson said she preferred just a sign-on bonus rather than a recruitment bonus, as it might be more complicated with friends working on the same jobs, which doesn't always work. W. Shorey recommended that sign-on bonuses could be \$1,000.00 at time of hire, \$4,000.00 at time of certification, \$5,000.00 one year from that date, and \$5,000.00 one year later. This should encourage applicants who will be interested in staying, and he hoped it could be implemented in the future.

5. Commissioner Johnson wished all a happy Thanksgiving and noted that she and her husband will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary. The Commissioners congratulated them and wished them a happy anniversary.

****B. Johnson moved, A. Fowler seconded to adjourn the session at 9:45 a.m. Unanimous.**

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