



COMMISSIONER'S MINUTES

Wednesday, January 3, 2024

MEETING STARTS AT 3:00 PM

SOMERSET COUNTY COMMISSION CHAMBERS

Present: Commissioners: Robert Sezak, Cyp Johnson, Scott Seekins, John Alsop and Joel Stetkis were present
Staff: Tim Curtis, Patrick Dolan, David Spencer, Mike Smith, Sheriff Dale Lancaster and Michael Pike.

A. CALL TO ORDER: Administrator Curtis called the meeting to order at 3pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

B. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Resolution 24 – 001: To appoint a Chairman to the Board of Commissioners

Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to appoint Robert Sezak as Chairman to the Board of Commissioners

Second: Commissioner Alsop

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 002: To appoint a Vice-Chair to the Board of Commissioners

Motion: Commissioner Stetkis motioned to appoint Scott Seekins as Vice-Chair to the Board of Commissioners

Second: Commissioner Alsop

Vote: 5-0

C. MINUTES:

Resolution 24 – 003: To Accept the Minutes of December 20, 2023

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to Accept the Minutes of December 20, 2023

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

D. WORKSHOP:

- 1. Discussion regarding Committee assignments:** The Commissioners discussed whether to keep all the appointments for 2023 the same for 2024. Commissioner Alsop expressed his concern over continuing as the County representative as the Chief Local Elected Official of the Central Western

Maine Workforce board of directors (CLEO). His concern is that this board is structured by Federal law that does not take into consideration the very rural nature of County Government in Maine. The consensus of the Commissioners was to table this appointment until a meeting with CWMW Director could be arranged. The Commissioners agreed that other appointments would remain the same from those made in January 2023.

2. **Discussion of UT TIF/Community Benefit Distinctions:** At the previous meeting there was discussion as to where TIF dollars could be spent as opposed to Community Benefit funds. The County Administrator provided documentation to clarify that TIF funds could only be used to benefit activities in the Unorganized Territories where Community Benefit funds could be spent County-wide to include the U/T. This distinction impacted two of the four Matching Grant applications that had been tabled from the previous meeting.

On a related matter, the County Administrator asked if the Commissioners would consider setting aside Community Benefit funds for Towns to apply to assist private residents impacted by the recent flooding (December 18&19, 2023). It was the consensus of the Board to allocate some funds to the Towns.

Motion by Commissioner Alsop to authorize the County Administrator in coordination with EMA Director Mike Smith to explore with the Towns in Somerset County the possibility of distribution of Community Benefit funds to assist with recovery from the recent storm damage and report back with a Resolution at the next meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Stetkis.

Motion carries 5-0.

3. **Discussion of Moosehead Enterprise Notice of Surrender of Cable TV Franchise in Concord:** The County Administrator said he had spoken with Earl Richardson with Moosehead Enterprises which operates cable television franchises in Greenville, Rockwood and Jackman as well as franchises in Moscow, Bingham and Concord. The latter system is aging out and is not connected to any network outside of the area. There are currently 30 customers in Moscow, 50 in Bingham and 11 in Concord that will be affected by the closure. The six-month notice is in compliance with the franchise agreement. Mr. Richardson said that the intention is to give customers monthly notice until the service ends in July 2024. The Commissioners received the notice as information.

E. NEW AGENDA ITEMS (Commissioners Only):

F. FINANCE REPORTING: Finance Director Patrick Dolan shared figures from the halfway point of the budget year. Hiring remains to be a struggle with 19 openings County-wide. Because of those unfilled positions, the budget is running at a surplus and Patrick expects that the jail budget will only require \$500,000 from undesignated fund balance this fiscal year rather than the \$2.2M budgeted for, resulting in a \$1.7M savings that can be carried into the next fiscal year. Budget meetings with each department will begin in January.

G. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT: County Administrator Curtis shared that he has contacted Districts 3, 4 and 5 to set up Caucus meetings to appoint members to the Budget Committee for 2024. Each of the corresponding Commissioners has a packet with details for the Caucus meetings. District 2 has two openings and the Administrator is looking for candidates. District 1 has no openings this year.

The County Administrator met briefly with Probate Judge Robert Washburn who told him he plans to run for re-election in 2024 and would like to meet with the Commissioners on January 17 to provide an update.

The Administrator also provided the Commissioners with templates for his evaluation which could be scheduled for an executive session for the next meeting on the 17th.

H. DEPARTMENT HEADS: EMA Director Mike Smith reported on the disaster declaration for Somerset from the December storm. He met with representatives from MEMA and FEMA to review claims from individual property owners. That threshold has been met for an emergency declaration; tomorrow Mike will review damage to public ways (roads/bridges/culverts) to finalize the initial declaration. Currently that amount is upwards of \$3.8M.

Commissioner Sezak asked about efforts to provide a shelter for displaced people in Norridgewock/Fairfield during the storm. Mike Smith said that he had been contacted by the Norridgewock Town Manager about opening a school for a shelter and provided some cots and blankets, but due to the nature of the storm, the Red Cross would not be able to provide immediate staffing. Mike stressed that shelters are not part of the County's EMA operations, but are provided at the local level by each Town.

In regards to the Communication Center, Mike reported that they finished the year with 95,428 calls for service; an increase of 2.3% despite not covering 17 towns in Kennebec County for the past six months.

Sheriff Lancaster reported that there were 377 calls for service last week. He recognized the detective division for solving the Circle K robbery in Madison. He is interviewing to fill another detective position and has applied for grant funding for placement of a K-9 service dog.

Commissioner Seekins asked about vehicles on order. The Sheriff confirmed that they have moved away from the Ford Explorers that have not been built yet and have started the RFP process to procure 2024 Chevy Tahoe units.

Major Mike Pike thanked the Commissioners for authorizing the purchase of a tractor/loader for the Jail to replace a failed unit that is utilized for snow and ice removal.

U/T Coordinator David Spencer reported that Rockwood Fire Department is applying for grant funds to purchase a mechanical CPR unit. He will be touring the U/T to document road washouts and repairs. There is significant damage on the Cool Road and on Carrying Place Road.

I. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Matching Grant Resolutions Tabled from the previous meeting (December 20, 2023)

Resolution 23 – 256: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Border Riders INC to purchase a new snowmobile trail drag (\$15,000):

Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Border Riders INC to purchase a new snowmobile trail drag (\$15,000):

Second: Commissioner Johnson

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 23 – 257: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Norridgewock Sportsmen Association for Trail Signage on the Kennebec Valley Trail (\$10,000)

Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Norridgewock Sportsmen Association for Trail Signage on the Kennebec Valley Trail (\$10,000)

Second: Commissioner Johnson

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 23 – 261: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Tardiff-Belanger American Legion Post 39 to pay for plans/blueprints for a new building (\$15,000): No action taken

Note: This resolution was passed over as the Administrator had received notice that the Legion Post 39 was withdrawing their application and hope to reapply in the spring.

Resolution 23 – 262: To award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Dead River Snowmobile Riders for equipment repairs and communication devices. (\$4,150) Tabled to Jan 3, 2024

Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to award a Community Benefit Matching Grant to Dead River Snowmobile Riders for equipment repairs and communication devices (\$4,150) Tabled to Jan 3, 2024

Second: Commissioner Johnson

Vote: 5-0

J. NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution 24 – 004: To appoint a Commissioner to the Union Negotiations Team for 2024

Motion: Commissioner Stetkis motioned to appoint Commissioner Seekins to the Union Negotiations Team for 2024

Second: Commissioner Alsop

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 005: To appoint a second Commissioner to the Union Negotiations Team for 2024

Motion: Commissioner Stetkis motioned to appoint Commissioner Johnson to the Union Negotiations Team for 2024

Second: Commissioner Seekins

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 006: To appoint a Commissioner to the CLEO Board

Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to table this resolution until the Commissioners can hear from the Director of Central/Western Maine Workforce Development.

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 007: To appoint a Commissioner Representative to the SEDC Board

Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to appoint Commissioner Stetkis to the Somerset Economic Development Corporation Board

Second: Commissioner Seekins

Discussion: Commissioner Johnson offered to serve as a back up to the SEDC board as needed.

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 008: To appoint a Commissioner Representative to the MCCA

Motion: Commissioner Alsop motioned to appoint Commissioner Sezak to the Board of Directors of the Maine County Commissioners Association

Second: Commissioner Johnson

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 009: To appoint the County Administrator as Proxy for the MCCA

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to appoint the County Administrator as Proxy for the MCCA

Second: Commissioner Alsop

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 010: To approve the Corrections Officer hires for the Somerset County Jail: Damon Jenhings: Took no action

Note: At the request of the Jail Administrator this Resolution was withdrawn.

Resolution 24 – 011: To approve the hire of Tiffany MacGregor as Probate Clerk.

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the hire of Tiffany MacGregor as Probate Clerk.

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 012: To approve the termination of Maynard Kemp as a Full-Time Correction Officer for the Somerset County Jail

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the termination of Maynard Kemp as a Full-Time Correction Officer for the Somerset County Jail

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 013: To approve the termination of Keygan Wyman as a Full-Time Correction Officer for the Somerset County Jail

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the termination of Keygan Wyman as a Full-Time Correction Officer for the Somerset County Jail

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 014: To recognize the retirement of Michael Smith as Director of Communication /EMA effective January 31, 2024

Motion: Commissioner Johnson motioned to recognize the retirement of Michael Smith as Director of Communication /EMA effective January 31, 2024

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Discussion: The Commissioners thanked Mike for his many years of service to the County.

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 15: To recognize the retirement of Cindy Dillon as Deputy Register of Probate effective February 2, 2024

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to recognize the retirement of Cindy Dillon as Deputy Register of Probate effective February 2, 2024

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Discussion: The Commissioners noted that Cindy was a dedicated employee who will be missed.

Vote: 5-0

Resolution 24 – 016: To approve the termination of Aislinn Slate as a Full-Time Correction Officer for the Somerset County Jail: Took no action

Note: At the request of the Jail Administrator this Resolution was withdrawn.

K. CAPITAL RESERVE EXPENDITURES:

Resolution 23 – 017: To approve the purchase of a 2023 KIOTI Tractor with Loader for the Somerset County Jail (\$41,725)

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the purchase of a 2023 KIOTI Tractor with Loader for the Somerset County Jail (\$41,725)

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

L. UNORGANIZED TERRITORY:

M. WARRANTS:

Resolution 24 – 018: To approve the Treasurer's Warrants for the General Fund, SCJ, UT and TIF Tax Revenue

General Fund: \$112,473.58

Jail:	\$127,541.83
U/T:	\$129,473.51
TIF Tax Revenue:	\$1,500.00
Total:	\$370,988.92

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to approve the Treasurer's Warrants for the General Fund, SCJ, UT and TIF Tax Revenue in the amounts shown in the resolution.

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Discussion: Commissioner Alsop asked if the County will always provide TIF funds for winter maintenance of the Kingsbury Pond Camp Owner Roads. Dave Spencer says it's up to the Commissioners to determine this spring whether the County wants to continue to fund this item.

Vote: 5-0

N. MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION ITEMS (Commissioners Only): None

O. PUBLIC HEARING: None

P. PUBLIC COMMENT: None

Q. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. Title 1, Section 405 (6) (A) Personnel/Sheriff's Office

Motion: Commissioner Seekins motioned to go into executive session under Title 1, Section 405 (6) (A) Personnel/Sheriff's Office

Second: Commissioner Stetkis

Vote: 5-0

The Commissioners entered into executive session at 4:15pm

The Commissioners came out of executive session at 4:27pm with no action taken.

R. ADJOURN:

Commissioner Johnson motioned to adjourn at 4:28 PM