

## KNOX COUNTY COMMISSION

### **Special Joint Meeting - Budget Review County Commission and Budget Committee**

**Thursday – November 6, 2008 – 5:00 p.m.**

A special joint meeting of the Knox County Commission and the Knox County Budget Committee was held on Thursday, November 6, 2008, at 5:00 p.m., at the county courthouse, 62 Union Street, Rockland, Maine. The executive assistant was present to record the minutes of the meeting.

Commission members present were: Anne Beebe-Center, Commissioner District #1, A. Mason Johnson, Jr., Commissioner District #2, and Lawrence F. Nash, Commissioner District #3.

County staff present included: County Administrator Andrew Hart, Executive Assistant Constance Johanson, Finance Director Kathy Robinson, Sheriff Donna Dennison, EMA Director Ray Sisk, Building Maintenance Supervisor Jonathan Grout, and Communications Director Linwood Lothrop.

Budget Committee members present were: Ann Matlack, Jim Bowers, Sid Lindsley, Bob Duke, Bart Virgie, Bill Jones, and Dorothy Meriwether.

Also present: Roger Moody of Camden.

### **Special Meeting – Agenda Thursday – November 6, 2008 – 5:00 p.m.**

#### **I. 5:00 Meeting Called To Order**

#### **II. 5:01 Approve Minutes**

1. Minutes of Budget Review Meeting of October 30, 2008.

#### **III. 5:03 Budget Review**

1. Emergency Management Agency (*page 16*)
2. Building Maintenance (*page 9-10*)
3. Communications (*pages 30-33*)

#### **IV. 6:15 Administrative Offices' Budget Revisited**

1. Commissioners' Stipends Revisited

#### **V. 7:00 Adjourn**

#### **I. Meeting Called to Order**

Budget Committee Chair Ann Matlack called the November 6, 2008 Budget Committee meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

Commission Chair Mason Johnson called the November 6, 2008 special meeting of the Knox County Commission to order at 5:04 p.m.

Commissioner Nash asked the Chair Mason Johnson if he could speak. Permission to speak was granted. Commissioner Nash introduced Commissioner-elect Roger Moody and congratulated him on his election victory.

#### **II. Minutes Approved**

Ann Matlack asked the Budget Committee to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting held on October 30, 2008.

- A motion was made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 30, 2008 by Jim Bowers. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.

Commissioner Johnson asked the Commission to approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting held on October 30, 2008.

- A motion was made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on October 30, 2008 by Commissioner Nash. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beebe-Center. A vote was taken with all in favor.

**III. Budget Review (A. Hart, K. Robinson, and Department Heads)**

County Administrator Andrew Hart stated that there were updated budgets available. Mr. Hart distributed copies of a spreadsheet with the mileage reimbursement figures for the administrative offices and copies of his explanation of budget changes.

Originally the Registrar of Deeds expected that revenues would be down by \$92,000.00 or perhaps even \$95,000.00. The current projection is closer to \$108,000.00 (\$108,506.00). Each revenue line was decreased so that the anticipated total for revenue has been reduced from \$430,000.00 to \$420,000.00.

The health insurance rate increase was received. The departmental health insurance lines were adjusted from a 10 percent increase to a 5.9 percent increase. This change represents a decrease of \$18,981.00 for health insurance.

Airport security personnel services, for part-time employees, was been adjusted from a cost of living increase of three percent to four percent.

The workers' compensation rate was originally projected to increase by 15 percent. Information was recently received that indicates that the rate increase is zero. The budget was adjusted to reflect this change, which translates into a decrease of \$3,754.00.

The tax cap adjusted calculations show that the budget is under the tax cap by \$17,534.00 after lowering Deeds' revenue projection by \$10,000.00, adding \$10,000.00 to the Building Maintenance budget, and reducing the Workers' Compensation budget line by \$3,754.00 because of the zero rate increase.

The proposed Building Maintenance budget for 2009 was increased by \$126,854.00 over the 2008 budget. Several factors contributed to the increase. The grounds maintenance was increased by \$3,500.00 for maintaining the courthouse shrubbery. The 2008 budget figure was reduced in anticipation of using inmates to maintain the plantings. Inmate labor was not consistently available. The increase will provide contractual grounds maintenance. Floor maintenance has not been performed in recent years and this has been budgeted as an annual maintenance cost for a contractor to professionally maintain the floors. The cost of heating fuel doubled and the County is locked into a price of \$4.28 per gallon until next summer. There is a projection of \$77,000.00 for capital projects for repairs to the granite stairs, window replacement, roof repairs, and sprinkler repairs. The County will probably add other capital projects in 2010 when the debt service is retired. The space needs for EMA, Patrol, and Communications could impact the debt service in 2010 if a new building is constructed.

**1. Emergency Management Agency - Proposed 2009 Budget:**

EMA Director Ray Sisk reported that more of his activities are external in nature. He has been involved in reaching out to the communities to assist in the development of programs such as sheltering. Mr. Sisk has acted as a liaison to increase training and EMA awareness. It was noted that the NIM's compliance was up. The EMA office actively participated in the storm damage assessment this year and assisted communities to receive funding for repairs caused by the storms. It was noted that it cost the County about \$1.00 for each \$13.50 that was brought in through grant and disaster recovery funding.

**Questions and Comments:**

Dorothy Meriwether asked if the non-union employees would receive the same four percent increase for the CPI as the union employees. It was noted that the department head's proposal was at three percent and the administrator's proposal was at four percent. It was assumed that the union and non-union employees would receive percentage increase this year, although historically the non-union employees did not always receive the same percentage increase.

The resignation benefits in 2008 covered a one time payment for the retiring EMA Director last year. The health insurance line was decreased because the current EMA Director has health insurance elsewhere, but will be eligible for the health insurance stipend which is included in the health insurance figure. The new building cost was taken out of the budget. The net budget in 2008 was \$85,234.00. The proposed EMA net budget for 2009 is \$50,821.00. It was noted that the funds had to be expended in order to receive the matching funds. The new building cost that was put in the 2008 budget for the lease/purchase of the Old County Road property was not utilized and has been put into reserves.

Dorothy Meriwether asked about the variance for the jail and its impact on the County's time line for solving the space issue. It appeared that the variance was the driving force to get into a building.

County Administrator Andrew Hart commented that there was still a space issue, especially for communications. The variance expires in June of 2009. The state took over the jails and the Board of Corrections is currently working on the jail budget.

Commissioner Nash asked the EMA Director why the administrator took out funding for the vehicle that was in the department head's proposed 2009 budget. Mr. Sisk responded that he had put a vehicle in as part of his capital improvement plan with the understanding that partial funding would be placed in the budget each year until there was enough to purchase a vehicle. It was removed because in order to obtain matching funds, the vehicle would have to be purchased. Mr. Sisk concurred with the administrator's proposal.

- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 EMA net budget proposal of \$50,821.00 by Jim Bowers. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 EMA net budget proposal of \$50,821.00 by Commissioner Beebe-Center. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nash. A vote was taken with all in favor.

## **2. Building Maintenance:**

Building Supervisor Jon Grout explained that a number of improvement projects were proposed and funding for those was included in the budget proposal. The heating fuel more than doubled this year. It was expected that the County would go out to bid during the first quarter of 2009 for heating fuel for June through December 2009. It was expected to go from \$4.28 for the first half of the year to \$3.30 for the second half of the year.

Ann Matlack asked if there were ways to save on fuel consumption. Mr. Grout responded that the settings were adjusted to economize.

Commissioner Nash asked why the gas, oil and grease expenditure line increased. Mr. Grout explained that the County had obtained an older pick-up truck through drug forfeiture and it was used to haul discarded items to the dump.

Bob Duke asked about the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Grout explained that a section of the roof was 30 years old and needed to be replaced. Repairs were done to stop the leaks, but the County should plan to replace it. The building supervisor reported that the boiler was nine years old and with a life expectancy of 15 – 20 years, it seemed prudent to start putting money aside for the boiler replacement project. It was noted that the idea behind the Capital Improvement Plan was to be proactive and plan for replacements rather than being reactive and searching for funds to replace items when they failed.

Mr. Grout reported that there were 62 windows in the courthouse and many of these needed to be replaced. The granite step replacement project, which had been discussed previously, was a matter of safety. The front steps are a designated fire exit. The \$40,000.00 budgeted for the project was estimated as the cost to complete, whereas the requested funds for the boiler and roof replacement would be put into reserves. The estimated cost of the roof replacement was \$21,000.00 and the estimated cost of the boiler replacement was \$45,000.00.

There was some discussion on the priority of the projects and how and when they should be funded.

- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 Building Maintenance net budget proposal minus \$12,000.00 (roof and boiler replacement) by Sid Lindsley. The motion was seconded by Bob Duke. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 Building Maintenance net budget proposal minus \$12,000.00 in the amount of \$389,298.00. by Commissioner Nash. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Beebe-Center. A vote was taken with all in favor.

## **3. Communications:**

Communications Director Linwood Lothrop gave a brief overview of his department, including statistics on call volumes and issues concerning his department. He reported that the budget proposal had been reviewed by the Dispatch Advisory Board and approved by the Executive Board. There were ongoing problems with establishing a tower on Coggins Hill in the Town of Union. Negotiations were continuing with U.S. Cellular, although liability was still an issue. Director Lothrop commented that there might be other options such as using the state tower and paying \$99.00 a month as a co-location fee.

Director Lothrop explained that the Capital Improvement Plan for his department included replacing the communication consoles that are out-dated and are not ergonomically correct. He explained that he was looking to future and current needs to prioritize upgrades. The consoles could last through 2009, but would need to be replaced in 2010. The voice recorder was over four years old and needed to be replaced. The voice recorder was used to defend the actions of the dispatchers. Director Lothrop reported that he had received a quote of \$1,500.00 as a trade-in allowance for the old voice recording equipment.

Sid Lindsley reported that Camden was supportive of the Communications Department and had no complaints concerning dispatch services.

Director Lothrop explained that the budget request of \$17,975.00 was the cost of the voice recorder and the \$27,500.00 represented half the cost of the work station replacement project.

- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 Communications net budget proposal in the amount of \$827,294.00 by Jim Bowers. The motion was seconded by Bill Jones. A vote was taken with six in favor (*Ann Matlack, Jim Bowers, Sid Lindsley, Bill Jones, Bart Virgie and Dorothy Meriwether*) and one opposed (*Bob Duke*).
- A motion was made to approve the county administrator's 2009 Communications net budget proposal in the amount of \$827,294.00 by Commissioner Beebe-Center. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nash. A vote was taken with all in favor.

#### **IV. Administrative Offices' Budget Revisited:**

##### Commissioners' Stipends Revisited:

Ann Matlack proposed that the budget proposal be kept in place because there would be two new commissioners in January 2009. It was not clear, at this time, how much time would be spent and how the work would be split among the Commission.

Bob Duke commented that after reviewing the Charter, there was a strong case for reducing the amount of the stipends for the commissioners. He remarked that it would be a disappointment if the commissioners had the same amount approved for 2009. It was noted there was a disparity in the representation of the County at the various committees and boards.

Commissioner Nash commented that he was not prepared to discuss the issue at this meeting.

Bill Jones commented that the expectations had been that much of the work done by the commissioners in the past would be done by the administrator. If the commissioners limited their duties to approving policy, then there would be a monetary savings realized. It was noted that the Charter Committee did not want the commissioners to set their own salaries.

Ann Matlack reported that she had attended many of the Charter Committee meetings and it was her impression that the Commission would operate in a similar manner as the City Council. The time spent away from the County was not considered, but rather the reduction in the time spent at the Commission meetings.

Commissioner Nash commented that Ed Sleeper, as commissioner, spent many hours attending meetings without additional remuneration.

Dorothy Meriwether asked why there was a stipend for the chair. It was explained that historically the chair had to be on call to answer questions and to assist in the daily running of the County before the Charter established a county administrator.

#### **V. Adjourn**

- A motion was made by Bob Duke to adjourn the Knox County Budget Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Sid Lindsley. A vote was taken with all in favor.
- A motion was made by Commissioner Beebe-Center to adjourn the Knox County Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nash. A vote was taken with all in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Constance Johanson  
Executive Assistant

**The Knox County Commission approved these minutes at the joint budget meeting held on November 10, 2008.**

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Anne H. Beebe-Center – Commissioner District #1

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A. Mason Johnson, Jr., Chair – Commissioner District #2

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Lawrence F. Nash – Commissioner District #3